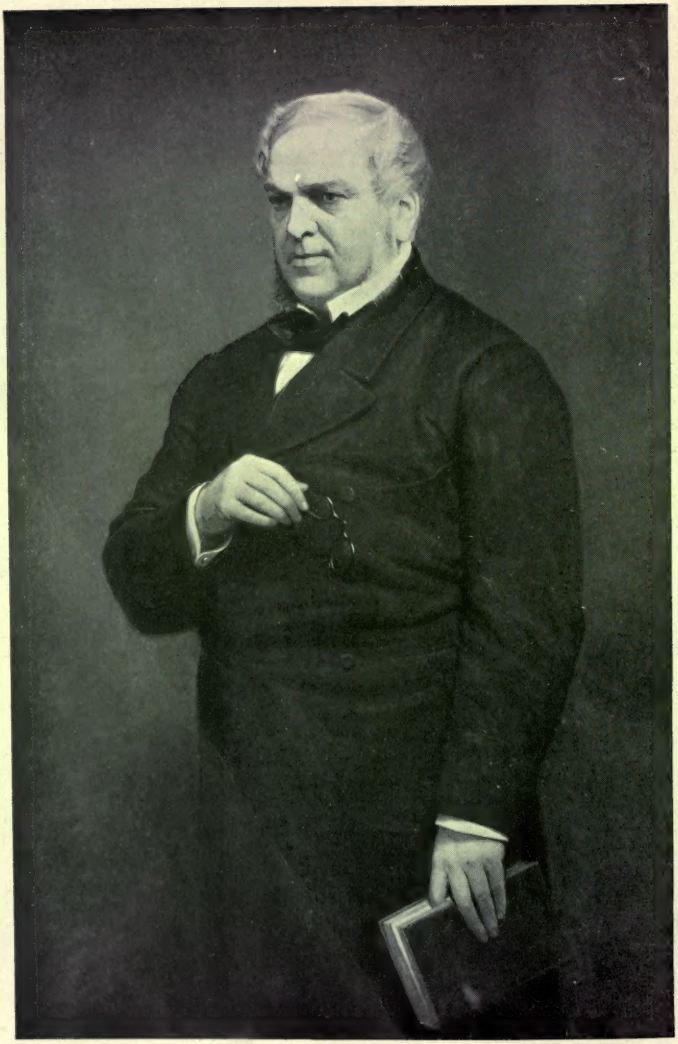
JOHN FORSTER
AND HIS FRIENDSHIPS



JOHN FORSTER

From the painting by C. E. Perugini

JOHN FORSTER AND HIS FRIENDSHIPS

BY

RICHARD RENTON

WITH THIRTY-EIGHT PORTRAITS AND OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS

LONDON
CHAPMAN AND HALL, LTD.
1912

12728 2
1614 13

PR
29
F67R45
1912

TO

MIRIAM MARGARET

THE TRUEST AND BEST OF WIVES

I INSCRIBE THIS BOOK

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE

JOHN FORSTER was a man of so many friendships; the position he occupied in the literary and artistic worlds of his day was so important and far-reaching, that to do even the commonest justice to his memory involved much investigation, time and patience.

Happily, my task has been rendered comparatively easy, owing to the ready help so generously accorded me. The result, whatever its fate may be, I leave to speak for itself, merely saying, that I have done my best to present John Forster, and some of the more intimate of his myriad friends, in their habits as they lived. I am old enough to have remembered much, but success would have been impossible without the assistance of those, who, either from personal knowledge, or from family tradition, have so largely contributed to whatever measure of it it may attain.

It only remains, therefore, that I should express my most heartfelt thanks to the Earl of Lytton, Hallam, Lord Tennyson, Sir Francis C. Burnand, Mr. S. M. Ellis, author of *Life of W. H. Ainsworth*, Mr. John Galsworthy, Mr. Charles Dickens, grandson of the novelist, Miss Georgina Hogarth, Miss Fanny Crosbie, Mr. F. Wormleighton, Mr. Walter Frith, Alderman W. G. Colbourne,

Washington Irving's Hotel, Stratford-on-Avon, Mr. F. C. Wellstood, M.A., Mr. W. Salt Brassington, F.S.A., Messrs. Maggs Bros., Sir Cecil Smith, and, indeed, every one connected with the Forster Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington, Mr. B. W. Matz, and to my wife, who has so greatly helped by her wise advice and assistance.

Wherever I have found it necessary to quote from any published work, I have acknowledged it in the text.

I would only add, that if this book should be the means of inducing any one, who as yet is unacquainted with John Forster, the work he did in the world, the friends he loved and who loved him, and the wonderful legacy he left to his country, to wish for further knowledge of him, I shall feel that I have been more than rewarded for all that I have been able, I fear very inadequately, to do, in my capacity of scribe.

RICHARD RENTON.

CHELSEA,
August 30, 1912.

CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
I	FROM NEWCASTLE TO LONDON	1
II	CHARLES LAMB, BROWNING AND MACREADY	19
III	THE CARLYLES AND MAZZINI	36
IV	THE TWO TRIUMVIRATES	49
V	CONCERNING A GREAT FRIENDSHIP	77
VI	A MARRIAGE, AND SOME PERSONAL PARTICULARS	94
VII	FORSTER AND STRATFORD-ON-AVON	116
VIII	BULWER, HIS FRIEND—AND ANOTHER	137
IX	LANDOR AND JERROLD	163
X	"BARRY CORNWALL" AND TENNYSON	178
XI	THE REV. ALEXANDER DYCE, AND A GREAT LORD CHIEF	197
XII	SOME LESSER FRIENDSHIPS	206
XIII	MAINLY THEATRICAL	254
XIV	A GREAT BEQUEST	263
	APPENDIX	270
	CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE LIFE AND WORKS OF JOHN FORSTER	271
	INDEX	272

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	To face page
JOHN FORSTER *(From the painting by C. E. Perugini.)*	*Frontispiece*
JOHN FORSTER (1830) *(From the portrait by Warrington and Maclise.)*	10
SIR J. EMERSON TENNANT *(From a photograph.)*	16
CHARLES LAMB *(From an engraving.)*	16
FACSIMILE OF INVITATION TO JOHN FORSTER TO ATTEND THE FUNERAL OF MARY ANNE LAMB .	24
FACSIMILE OF TITLE PAGE OF THE COPY OF "PAULINE" PRESENTED TO JOHN FORSTER BY ROBERT BROWNING	28
WILLIAM CHARLES MACREADY *(From an engraving of the miniature by R. Thornton, A.R.A.)*	32
ROBERT BROWNING *(From an engraving by J. C. Armytage.)*	32
THOMAS CARLYLE *(From a photograph, 1854.)*	38
JANE WELCH CARLYLE. *(From a miniature by K. Macbay, R.S.A.)*	38
GIUSEPPE MAZZINI *(From an engraving by H. Meyer of the portrait by J. Henshaw.)*	44

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

To face page

CHARLES DICKENS (1839) 50
(*From an engraving by Finden of a painting by Daniel Maclise, R.A.*)

JOHN FORSTER (1840). 58
(*From a drawing by Daniel Maclise, R.A.*)

DANIEL MACLISE, R.A. 66
(*From an engraving by J. Smith of the painting by E. M. Ward, A.R.A.*)

FACSIMILE OF ENTRIES IN DICKENS'S DIARY . 78

MRS. JOHN FORSTER 96
(*From a crayon sketch by Sir Wm. Boxall, R.A.*)

LETITIA ELIZABETH LANDON 104
(*From an engraving by J. Thomson of the painting by Daniel Maclise, R.A.*)

JOHN FORSTER'S HOUSE, 58 LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS 114
(*From a photograph by T. W. Tyrrell.*)

"RED HORSE" HOTEL, STRATFORD-ON-AVON . 124
(*From a drawing by H. S. Rhodes.*)

FACSIMILE OF A PAGE FROM THE VISITORS' BOOK AT SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTHPLACE, 1852 . . 128

FACSIMILE OF A PAGE FROM THE VISITORS' BOOK AT ANNE HATHAWAY'S COTTAGE, APRIL 21, 1852 132

JOHN FORSTER'S HOUSE, PALACE GATE, KENSINGTON 148
(*From a photograph taken at the time of his residence there.*)

SIR E. BULWER LYTTON 158
(*From an engraving.*)

LEIGH HUNT 158
(*From a drawing by J. Hayter.*)

DOUGLAS JERROLD 168
(*From an engraving.*)

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

To face page

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR 168
(*From an engraving of the painting by Sir Wm. Boxall, R.A.*)

B. W. PROCTER 180
(*From an engraving.*)

JOHN FORSTER'S LIBRARY AT PALACE GATE, KENSINGTON 194
(*From a drawing by John Watkins.*)

THE REV. ALEXANDER DYCE 200
(*From an engraving by C. H. Jeens.*)

FACSIMILE OF A LETTER FROM JOHN FORSTER TO W. J. FOX 210

FACSIMILE OF A LETTER FROM JOHN LEECH TO JOHN FORSTER 216

JOHN LEECH 220
(*From an engraving.*)

W. P. FRITH, R.A. 220
(*From a painting by Augustus Egg, R.A.*)

THE FORSTER BEQUEST READING-ROOM AT VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM 264
(*From a photograph by G. Brooker.*)

FACSIMILE OF THE PAGE FROM BROWNING'S "PARACELSUS," WITH AUTOGRAPH NOTE IN MARGIN BY THE POET TO JOHN FORSTER . . . 266

FACSIMILE OF THE TITLE-PAGE OF THE FIRST EDITION OF "GULLIVER'S TRAVELS" IN THE FORSTER BEQUEST 268

JOHN FORSTER AND HIS FRIENDSHIPS

Chapter I: *From Newcastle to London*

THE year 1812 would be specially remarkable, in a literary sense, if for nothing else than that it saw the birth of three notable men of letters; Robert Browning, a great if not a popular poet; Charles Dickens, novelist, alike great *and* popular, and John Forster, truly great as historian, biographer, critic, and journalist. That of the three Forster is to-day the least known, is, in spite of his being in his time one of the chiefs of English literature, not in any way surprising, when the nature of his own work, and his acknowledged position as friendly adviser in the case of the works of others, is considered. It is a thousand pities that it should be so, for it undoubtedly means the missing so much, by the literary student, as by the ordinary person who reads, admittedly, for mere entertainment. Again, most of the people, nowadays, who know about Forster at all, regard him simply as the biographer of his friend, Charles Dickens. This is as unfortunate, as it is unjust, limiting, or rather ignoring, as it does,

the greater credit, which, beyond question, belongs to John Forster in his own person, for the high character of the work for which he himself was responsible. The truth is, that the personality and national reputation of Dickens overshadowed that of his friend, to such an extent, and in such a way, that whatever fame the latter acquired before his death, is to-day a practically unknown quantity, save to the faithful few. It is the object of this book to endeavour to correct, if possible, this impression; to show what manner of man John Forster really was, and how great and abiding an influence he exercised, both by his writings, and by his wise advisings to his many friends, upon the literature of the latter half of the Victorian era. But it is mainly as the sympathetic and affectionate intimate, that it is proposed to present him in the following pages. Statesmen, poets, philosophers, artists, actors, all were attracted to him. From the beginning to the end of his career, he knew every one worth knowing. The rugged eccentricity of Carlyle; the irritability of Macready; the exacting temperament of Dickens, disturbed him not a whit. Even Landor's growlings had no effect upon him to ruffle the even surface of his mind and heart. He took the rough with the smooth, and lived upon the average.

Curiously, the three men whose centenaries we are celebrating this year, were early destined to be friends. What Dickens and Forster were to each other, all the world knows, but it can hardly be said to be so widely recognised how truly Browning loved Forster. When all men carped at and condemned the young poet,

Forster alone, in the *Examiner*, courageously expressed the faith that was in him with regard to the literary promise of *Pauline*, Browning's first bid for public recognition. This timely encouragement so appealed to the poet's sense of grateful appreciation, that it coloured the whole of his life-friendship with Forster.

Indeed, apart from his own literary activity, which was phenomenal, Forster's mission seems to have largely been, to be of use to his friends, whenever and wherever their individual interests appeared to demand it. As the story of his life unfolds itself, it will be seen how true this was, and that it was to Forster, the common friend of them all, that each member of his circle came, in season and out of season, with his or her perplexities, sorrows, worries and what not, perfectly assured of such sympathy and help as might be needed at the moment, and which would, as surely, be fitted in every way to the occasion. Forster was, in a word dependable, and in that lies the whole secret of it. Many of his friends were, on the other hand, undependable to a degree—Leigh Hunt, for instance—but, on the principle that opposites make for the closest and truest friendship, even these contributed by their very undependability to create a bond so strong as to be, humanly speaking, unbreakable.

Newcastle, the scene of John Forster's birth, on the 2nd of April, 1812, is not by any means the ideal place for a literary man's entrance into life. Its murky skies, grimy buildings, hard-headed, grimly-independent citizens, go to make up an atmosphere scarcely conducive to the creation of even the average "writing

person," as the late Sir Walter Besant phrased it. Clever men, however, men of genius, have come out from it from time to time, nearly all of whom having been inventors, scientists, the world's utilitarian benefactors. Not many poets, not many men of letters have hailed from Newcastle, of the few John Forster being, perhaps, the most noteworthy. His paternal grandfather, John Forster of Corsenside, must have been a man of some considerable substance, the family records inclining to show that he was the owner of much landed property, which was left, in apparently equal division, to his two elder sons, Lionel and Thomas. As a younger son, Robert Forster, father of the future biographer of Dickens, received little or nothing. His circumstances during the remainder of his life were never really good, so much so, that but for the liberality of his brother John—six years his senior, and in a better position every way—his four children could not possibly have received anything but the barest elementary education. Robert's son John was named after his uncle—Christopher, the other boy after his maternal grandfather. The two daughters, Jane and Elizabeth, never married, Elizabeth surviving until 1868.

Mary, Robert's wife, and John Forster's mother, was, in every way, a truly remarkable woman. Gentle, tenderhearted, and full of that far-reaching spirit of motherhood, which embraces, in its ministering instincts, every living human thing, she found her greatest happiness in her care for others. Her sister Anne, married to a Mr. Gilmour, and even less prosperous than was she herself, maintained a hard struggle for exist-

ence on her husband's wage of less than a guinea a week. She and her family of eight children would inevitably have starved but for the sisterly help of Mary Forster, whose elder son John inherited in large measure his mother's kindly and sympathetic nature.

Evidence of this may be traced throughout almost the whole of the unique story of those wonderful friendships, which contributed to make the life of John Forster differ, essentially, from that of every other man of letters of his era and generation. A son of his aunt, Anne Gilmour, testified at the death of his cousin John, to the practical warmth of his affections, even in his boyhood at Newcastle. "How kind he was to me when we were boys together," said James Gilmour. "He would sacrifice much to give me pleasure. And this not once nor twice. It was the same with all of us; he followed in the footsteps of my aunt, his mother, who might rightly be called the good angel of my family. Although, even as a boy, his outward manner was apt to be misunderstood by strangers, yet he always seemed to have the power to turn desirable acquaintances into friends."

As will be seen, this magnetic power intensified with the years, those coming within range of its influence having invariably to confess their inability to resist the charm of the man, even had they so willed, so wisely and irresistibly was the charming exercised and perfected.

Newcastle, with all its grime and tireless activity as a great productive labour-centre, possesses an ancient grammar-school, where, by the help of "Uncle John,"

the eldest hope of Robert and Mary Forster was kept until, emulating Eldon and Collingwood, he reigned as head boy of the school. He early showed the bent of his mind, by making the classics his special study. A favourite pupil of the head master, the Rev. Edward Moises, it is feasible to suppose that that gentleman prophetically saw in the boy the promise of the man, fostering and encouraging his instincts and intuitions, and helping him to lay the foundation, upon which, long years after, was built that fine series of historical studies, "The Lives of the Statesmen of the Commonwealth."

The old school-house is now no more. The sometime classical scholar lived to see it replaced by the railway station; but often and often, in the days of his successful manhood, he spoke feelingly, and in the case of his old preceptor, in terms of the greatest affection, of his connection with Newcastle Grammar-School. This was, however, only to his intimates. Full of the milk of human kindness, he was not a demonstrative man; nor did he wear his heart upon his sleeve. To be the recipient of John Forster's soul-confidences was, indeed, to write oneself a privileged man or woman; was something to cherish as a memory, unforgettable, and not lightly to be esteemed. In one of those rare moments when he could be persuaded to talk about his early years and experiences, he said, that, in a vaguely insistent way, literature, as he then understood it, was beckoning him onward, and creating within him a peculiar interest in it. The irresistible impulse to write, as is not unusual in such cases, soon impelled

him to the production of a story, which, in due course, and to his intense joy and satisfaction, received the honour of publication. Then, too, as all through his life, he was passionately devoted to the theatre. It satisfied the dramatic instinct which strongly possessed him; was, indeed, an inherent part of his nature. He even went so far as to write a play, *Charles at Tunbridge, or the Cavalier of Wildinghurst*, for the benefit of Mr. Thomas Stuart, one of the actors of the Stock Company at the Theatre Royal, Newcastle. But even at this time his capacity for making friends distinctly manifested itself. The result was not always satisfactory from the parents' point of view. For instance, a lady well known to his mother objected to John Forster that he took her son Frank too often to the theatre. She gave him to read a tract upon the evils of playgoing. He not only read it, but wrote, in reply, and sent to the lady in question, an essay entitled "A Few Thoughts in Vindication of the Stage."

Written in June, 1827, when its author was but a little more than fifteen years of age, this essay may safely be regarded as the first effort, in logical criticism, of the future historian and biographer. It justified the drama on religious grounds, so meeting the religious objection. It set out to prove, that the wise and good in Greece, Rome, and other European States in ancient times, encouraged, and put the seal of their approval upon the traffic of the stage; that the right use of the theatre was conducive to the well-being of the moral and intellectual life of man. A short extract from it is given by Prof. Henry Morley in his brief biographical

sketch of Forster. It proves indisputably the soundness and activity of Forster's thinking, and may well be reproduced here.

"The laws restrain those actions only which loosen the bonds of society. Religion commands such as render them more efficacious. What a reinforcement for religion and the laws, when they enter into alliances with the theatre, where the objects of contemplation are animated, where virtue and vice, happiness and misery, folly and wisdom, are exhibited in a thousand different forms; where the human heart, upon the rack of the passions, confesses its slightest movements; where all masks, all disguises disappear, and truth, pure and incorruptible, shines in open day."

Not bad for a boy in his teens. Mind and pen used in this fashion could not help but do good work in the world in the days that should come. Whether or not the lady for whom this essay was specially intended, read, marked, learned and inwardly digested it, it is impossible now to say. It is to be hoped, for the sake of her own enlightenment, that she did. In that case, and to be consistent, she ought most certainly to have revoked her preconceived opinion with regard to its author's calibre, both mental and moral. Again, it is to be hoped, this time for the sake of justice and fair-play, that she did. It is hard to say.

"Women," said Thomas Carlyle to a friend of the writer's, long dead, "women are like Mrs. Bulldog; once get their teeth into anything, and nothing in Heaven or Earth will induce them to let go."

But the essay had another and far-reaching effect

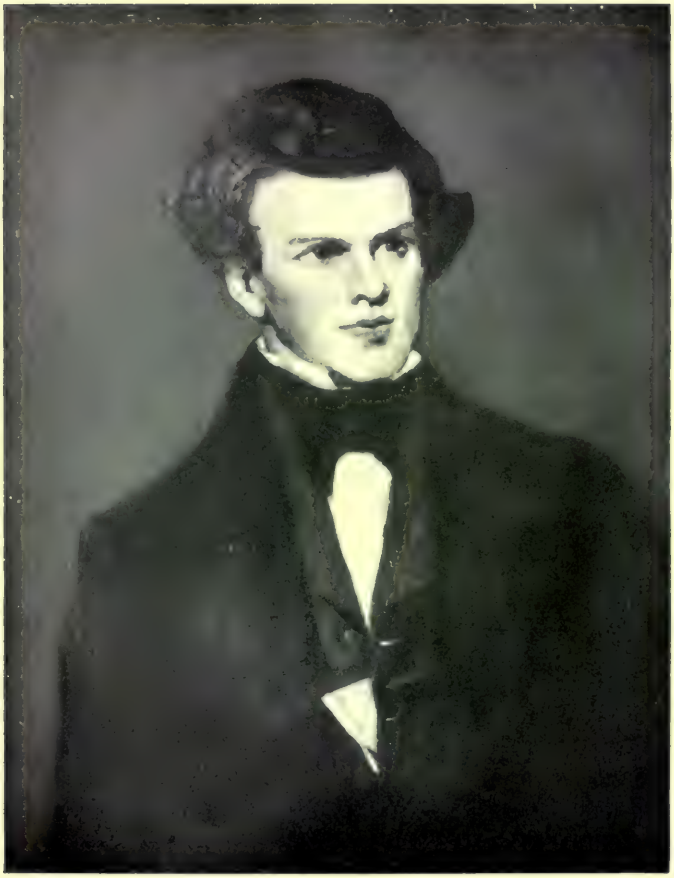
upon the fortunes of John Forster. It led his family to believe in him. That was a notable point gained.

"The boy must go to college," everybody said. Yes, but how about ways and means! Without substantial help the accomplishment of such a proposition, however desirable, was out of the question, a sheer impossibility.

Who would come to the rescue? Who would materially express the courage of the family opinion, and furnish the sinews of war that would enable the young aspirant for literary honours to fight the great fight for fame and fortune? Who but Uncle John, the Fairy Godfather!—the large-hearted, good genius of the heavily-handicapped household of Robert and Mary Forster. To him be all the credit. Throughout his whole after-life, nephew John never forgot; never showed even the slightest disposition to kick down the ladder by which, and by which alone, his life-climb to success was made possible and assured. Uncle John may, in truth, be regarded as the first of the long line of friends associated with the name of his famous nephew. Great names, names that will endure as long as English literature itself, figure in the list, but that of John Forster the Second must always, as of prescriptive right, head the splendid catalogue.

For a brief period the future historian and biographer was at Cambridge. Some time in 1829, however, he came to London, a lad of seventeen, and entered, as one of the first students in the class of English Law in the newly constituted University College. This must not be confounded with the University of London,

which has a separate charter, and alone has the power of examining and granting degrees. The older, and, consequently, original Institution, University College had, on the same broad basis, the power of teaching only. This separation did not take place until November, 1836, when, on the same day, the two distinctive charters were granted. Forster, therefore, graduated under the old and original arrangement. We get a very illuminating idea of John Forster's personal appearance about this time from a letter of W. J. Fox, the fast friend of Robert Browning and of Forster, and whose daughter subsequently married the only son of the poet. The actual reference by Fox is to the first meeting, at Macready's at Elstree in 1835, of Browning and Forster. The latter was, says Fox, " a tall, ardent, noticeable young fellow," who, as one of the literary staff of the *Examiner*, had written in that paper a generous critical notice of Browning's first published poem, *Pauline*. This incisive picture of Forster, was true of him to the very day of his death. A slight stooping of the shoulders there might have been, perhaps; acute physical suffering may have dimmed the eyes in which as a youth once shone the ardour of his ambitious soul; but go where he would, in whatever society he found himself, John Forster, actually, as intellectually, head and shoulders above the crowd, was always a noticeable personality. It is worthy of note, how from the very beginning, from the days of his first lodgings at Penton Place, Pentonville, No. 17, this wonderful magnetic gift—for such it undoubtedly was—of attracting the friendly attentions of those



JOHN FORSTER (1830)

From the portrait by Warrington and Maclise

among his fellows whose friendship was worth the having, manifested itself, and rapidly developed. Prof. Henry Morley, in a short biographical sketch of him, says truly, that it was " his generous warmth, his eager intellect, bent always upon worthy work, his winning sincerity, and the sound judgment, already conspicuous, that made him throughout his after years the chosen counsellor to whom every friend desired to bring his most difficult problems of life for solution." James Whiteside, afterwards Lord Chief Justice of Ireland, a fellow law-student with Forster at University College, always spoke of him in terms of affectionate regard.

" Forster's intimate friends," he would often say, " were men of culture, and he himself was worthy of their love and friendship." High praise this, coming as it does from such a man; one who could boast of years of unbroken friendship with the subject of his eulogy. But it is not an isolated instance. James Emerson, afterwards Sir James Emerson Tennent, and a fellow student of Forster's at University College. writes his " Dear Foster " (he was as yet unfamiliar with his new friend's name) to come and spend an evening with him.

This was on October the 29th; by December the two were on terms of equal friendship. Forster was able to help Emerson by the loan of books, for the latter was already a distinguished writer on classical subjects, and was then busy upon a History of Modern Greece, which was published in 1830. But it was not all scholarship and high thinking. The " feast of reason and the flow of soul," was frequently interlineated with the more

material delights of "oysters, fog and grog," the fog, be it noted, tobacco smoke.

These symposia, although eminently and truly convivial (in its best sense), were by no means in the nature of being the irresponsible wild orgies of an ultra Bohemianism. It was the iron of keen intellectuality sharpening itself upon its fellow iron.

Even in my own young days the talking of "shop" was not regarded in the light of a reprehensible social lapse, as, alas, it is in these degenerate times. In the early part of the nineteenth century, literary men and artists met in unconventional fashion to freely discuss the things that professionally interested them. So it was, therefore, that the little suppers at Penton Place, partook in large measure of that interchange of ideas and opinions, which undoubtedly made for the future professional perfecting of those there met together. Andrew Amos, his law professor at University College, companioned with Forster in these early days, an association which lasted (though latterly by letter only) right through the years. Amos, Forster has been heard to say, was a very clever man, and one who could also appreciate mental capacity in others. But apart from his admiration for Forster's intellectual gifts, he really loved the man. When we come to consider, it is not a little wonderful, that, young as he was, Forster could, and did inspire most of those with whom he came in contact with more than the ordinary feeling of affectionate regard for himself. Yet some there were whom his seemingly abrupt manner repelled, merely because they could not read the real man within the rough binding.

How many people never get further than the covers of a book; never take the trouble to open and read for themselves? It was evidently so in Forster's case. That he was badly bound is undeniable, but that was no excuse for those who elected to judge him by that fact, and not by the right good, sterling quality of the material between the covers. To change the metaphor, he was, unquestionably, a rough diamond, but to those who knew and loved him, a gem of the very first water.

It is curious, that, of the three student friends, Emerson, Whiteside and Forster (to take them in order of seniority), Forster alone seriously adopted literature as a profession. He certainly, in 1830, studied law in the chambers of the eminent special pleader, Thomas Chitty, (afterwards one of her Majesty's judges, and famous also as an authoritative writer on legal subjects,) but it was just the instinctive reaching out of a logically-constituted mind, an intuitive desire for so much of that invaluable legal training as would aid him in future marshalling of great historical facts. Emerson and Whiteside both followed him into Chitty's chambers, the former upon Forster's special advice, specially solicited.

Although, as has been said, a writer of no mean calibre on classic subjects, and later on, the author of a *Natural History of Ceylon*, Emerson was not, in the fullest sense, a literary man. A typical, and more than respectable civil servant, he filled many important Government positions, receiving the honour of knighthood on his appointment as Civil Secretary to the Colonial Government in Ceylon. By this time he had married—John Forster alone, before the event, being

in his confidence—and adopted the name of his wife's family, becoming James Emerson Tennent, by which name he is best known. With Whiteside it was law, and law only. His distinguished career in Ireland as Lord Chief Justice is too well known to need comment here.

A sound lawyer, his decisions were always just, and well-balanced, being, ill-regulated prejudice apart, received with universal respect. A great judge, he was a great man, and, what is more, a great friend.

The time passed in Chitty's chambers may be fairly taken as the crucial period of John Forster's life. Recognising in him the making of a lawyer of the first rank, Chitty lost no opportunity to persuade his pupil to adopt law as a profession.

Master and pupil were already firm friends, the bond between them strengthening with the years. Availing himself of this feeling, Chitty sought to seduce the other from his literary love. "There is nothing to which you may not rise in the law," he urged, "no prize you may not win, if you so desire. Literature, my dear fellow!—bah!—there is not enough in it to keep the proverbial pot boiling, much less to make even a decent fortune."

Forster listened to the voice of the charmer, charming so persuasively—listened, but that was all. Literature, by this time, had him for her own, body and soul.

It was just before the passing of the Reform Bill—a time of great and strenuous political agitation and unrest. Chitty could not help noting the keenness of Forster's interest in the burning political questions of the hour. But, to his disappointment, he saw also, that

this interest in politics, was, by his association of past history with present events, drawing his pupil away from a study of law for law's own sake, to the all-absorbing pursuit of literature.

In such cases it is temperament that counts; the artistic temperament, that is; and that Forster was largely imbued with it, no one, who reads him, will assuredly venture to deny. To quote Henry Morley again—

"That other faculty of clear judgment, which caused his chief in a special pleader's office to see in him an ornament of the bench lost to his own profession, was not wasted, for it helped to give him in after years a first place in dignity and usefulness among the critics, and to fit him for his work as a biographer." Wise words, which make easy of interpretation much about John Forster that is enigmatic, and hard of understanding.

Evidently, his law studies did not prevent him from doing a certain amount of fugitive literary work. But eighteen years old, we find him, in 1830, writing for the magazines both in Newcastle and in London. Hitherto, Uncle John had been the paymaster, but now, gradually, brighter prospects opened, and Forster could see the ultimate doing away with the need for further home supplies. His earnings perceptibly increased; friends began to multiply, and altogether, life for John Forster showed unmistakable signs of opening-out, in a way that promised fruition and reward, the very fullest. Then commenced, in 1831, his camp-shiftings towards the West, not to reach which is, with the man of letters,

practically a confession of failure. His next move from Pentonville was to No. 4 Burton Street, Burton Crescent, St. Pancras. Not very far on the road, but sufficiently so to be suggestive. In Burton Street, the old Liberty Hall was again set up, but with this difference, that with better prospects the faintly-perceptible spirit of a growing dignity might be noted alike in hosts and friends. With Forster, a certain dignity was, more or less, inherently present. The wild abandonment of reckless irresponsibility ever had but little attraction for him. It clashed with the well-balanced evenness of his disposition.

To a certain extent, and up to a specific period of his life, he was a Bohemian, but it was always within limits. Thus, it more than once happened that a particularly unruly spirit, given habitually to "kicking over the traces," would resent this "Roman front," as one such called Forster's familiar attitude of semi-dignified placidity, and leave the charmed circle in high dudgeon, wiping the dust from off his shoes with many a Pistol-warranted imprecation, and fierce "biting of the thumb."

Forster loved to be hospitable; it was part of his nature. To be the "founder of the feast" was a far greater pleasure to him than to be a mere guest at another man's board. His naturally kindly disposition always inclined him rather to giving than taking. There was nothing ostentatious in all this, it sprang from a pure delight in ministering to the pleasure of others. His intimates well knew this side of his character, and good-naturedly let him have his own way in the matter. To the end of his days he was the same; genial, happy-



SIR J. EMERSON TENNANT
From a photograph



CHARLES LAMB
From an engraving

minded, and ever desirous to spend himself in the service, and for the pleasure of others. Emerson, now launched on the summer sea of Civil Service inactivity, writes to him about this time, 1831, from somewhere abroad, inviting himself to Burton Street, fully assured of a hearty welcome. More, he suggests, in the letter, a *menu* for the " little dinner " which is to celebrate their meeting; and it may be fairly concluded that Forster, always so anxious to please, would go out of his way to make that suggestion a successfully accomplished fact. That the two friends, joined by Whiteside, and, perhaps, Amos, enjoyed the meeting-hour to the full, it is safe to assume. It could not well be otherwise, seeing that the three men were in the bonds of such a friendship as made even a simple gathering like to this an occasion for the due observance of all the ancient and traditional rites of true boon-companionship known to the calendar.

Emerson's interest in all Forster's aims and aspirations was both genuine and keen. Through all the legal drudgery in Chitty's chambers, his friend's mind was ever awork, and planning out some future literary achievement. While only eighteen, he had incepted a scheme for a history of the times of Charles the First, and the Commonwealth. To write the Life of Oliver Cromwell was the first great idea that occurred to him. Henry Morley says, that it was as early as March, 1830, that Emerson put the question to him : " How goes on Cromwell ? Have you made a commencement yet ? "

Not Emerson, not even Forster himself, could have foreseen, that, in all essentials, " The Lives of the Statesmen of the Commonwealth " would, in six short years,

be an accomplished fact; that of those lives, that of Sir John Eliot, would, for all time, rank as one of the finest historical biographies in the language, and certainly as the most illuminating contribution to the history of the period. The reason for this is, the "human" in the work. It was Forster's firm conviction and belief, that men's lives, not mere dates, events, and opinionative conclusions (often wrong, and, by consequence, grossly misleading), are, or should be, the one true basis and foundation of history as a living, enlightening record. To the fact that he practised that which he believed and preached, is due to the home-thrusting vividness of his wonderful picturing of the happenings in this England of ours at the most fateful period of our history as a nation.

Chapter II: *Charles Lamb, Browning and Macready*

MERELY to mention the name of Charles Lamb, the gentle Elia, is to conjure up the picture of one of the truest of men; to wake memories of a figure, at once the most pathetic and the most delightful, of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, whose like, in all human probability, will never be seen again. Charles Lamb moves across the field of our musings, physically weak, but mentally a giant; a wit among wits, the keen yet kindly dissector of the faults, frailties and foibles of his fellow man, but more than all as one born out of due time, to do a thing which, it is fairly safe to say, the ordinary man would have shrunk from doing, even on compulsion. Lamb's life, as we know it, was one long, voluntary sacrifice, inspired by his devoted affection for his unhappy sister, its only compensation the friendships of those who loved him for what he was, even as for what he did. It is somewhat difficult to determine with absolute exactness the precise date of Forster's introduction to Lamb, and how, and through whose instrumentality it was brought about. Personally, I am inclined to think that the acquaintance may have originated through some contri-

butions of Lamb's to one of the newspapers—the *True Sun*, perhaps—with which Forster was at that time more or less connected. It certainly could not have taken place earlier than 1830, as Forster, a lad of seventeen only, came to London in 1829. Still, it is just possible that the introduction was made through Moxon, for Lamb himself, in a brief note to Moxon (undated), writes in such a way as to suggest that he, Lamb, would like to be placed in communication with the young man from Newcastle. "I take," he says, "Forster's name to be John. But you know whom I mean—the Pym-praiser—not Pimp-raiser." If I am right, then it must have been after the publication of the biography of the great Parliamentarian.

Again, Procter (Barry Cornwall) may have been the friendly medium, although a patient search through Procter's letters to Forster has failed to afford confirmation of such a theory.

But happen howsoever it did, we find Lamb writing affectionately to Forster in 1831, complaining because the latter did not come to see him oftener. Lamb was then nearing the close of his life, and the end of his earthly sorrows.

That the friendship between the two was indeed peculiarly close and—on Lamb's side, at any rate—satisfying, is clear from many another of Elia's letters to Forster. They are all undated, one, written presumably in 1834 (in the December of which year he died), pathetically bewailing the writer's loneliness, and expressing a craving for friendly comfort. He had just placed "sister Mary," after one of her periodical

paroxysms of mad phrensy, as a mental patient at Walden House, Edmonton.

He says: "I implore you to come and see me to keep me from drinking too much, as I did yesterday." Poor Lamb! may he not be forgiven for the lapse? Who would dare throw a stone at this good, brave soul, for giving way in a dark moment; with no man at his side to stay his hand, or to speak the one word of friendly sympathy which would draw back the curtain and let in the light? His affectionate regard for Forster is still further shown in another note. "Dear Boy," he writes, "When I am more composed, I shall hope to see you and Procter here."

There is a world of yearning in such words as these. And yet, poor Lamb, the hero, had his lighter moments, when, i' the vein, the natural man in him revelled in quip and jest; when, a veritable Lord of Misrule, he laughed—and laughed, with both hands to his sides, until sadness gained its throne again, and all was dark and hopeless, even as before.

He asks Forster for box-orders for the Olympic Theatre. He loved the playhouse, as Forster did. The failure of his farce, *Mr. H.*, in no wise damped his dramatic ardour. In spite of his wit, and love of the humorous, his taste inclined, evidently, towards tragedy. A truly friendly soul, he took no interest in the disputes and misunderstandings of his neighbours or acquaintance. "I never," he said on one occasion to Forster, "trouble myself about other people's quarrels. I do not always understand my own." Sometimes he would show a humorous impatience, as,

for instance, in a short note addressed to Sheridan Knowles and Forster jointly. He had invited them to come and see him. They, by way of excuse, pleaded a previous engagement to dine together.

Lamb's reply is short, to the point, and eminently characteristic. "Swallow your damned dinner, and your brandy-and-water fast, and come immediately." Not exactly a many-sided man. That does not correctly express what he really was. It was more as if he had the power, at certain times, to shut away his sorrows and be just himself.

Very simple, but then, Charles Lamb was simplicity itself. It was his very simplicity which made him a hero. That Forster, who was, within sight almost of the twentieth century, to write the Life of Charles Dickens, should, by reason of his youthful friendship with that other and older Charles, be a link with the eighteenth, the picturesque, Georgian century, is curiously and notably interesting. Such links always are. When Lamb was born, Dr. Johnson, Sir Joshua Reynolds, David Garrick, Oliver Goldsmith, and a crowd of old-time worthies, were recent memories in the minds of men; one or two of them even still in the flesh. Highwaymen yet cried "Stand and deliver!"—the gallows claimed the mere filcher of a loaf of bread. London citizens could easily remember the sight of the skulls of traitors as decorating—save the mark!—the summit of Temple Bar.

To think of all this: that John Forster clasped the hand of and exchanged words with this sometime baby

boy, who, full of years and sorrows, died within memory of the middle-aged amongst us, staggers imagination, and, in a sense, annihilates time. It is disappointing that there is no record of this remarkable friendship as on Forster's side. There is nothing in existence, in the shape of letters from him to Lamb, which would throw any light upon it. Still, what we are able to glean from Elia's few and short notes to Forster, gives us some sort of an idea as to what Forster's feelings were as towards the older man. Both were charged with that personal magnetism which compels regard. It was, in effect, an interchange of attraction, with mutual respect and liking as the result.

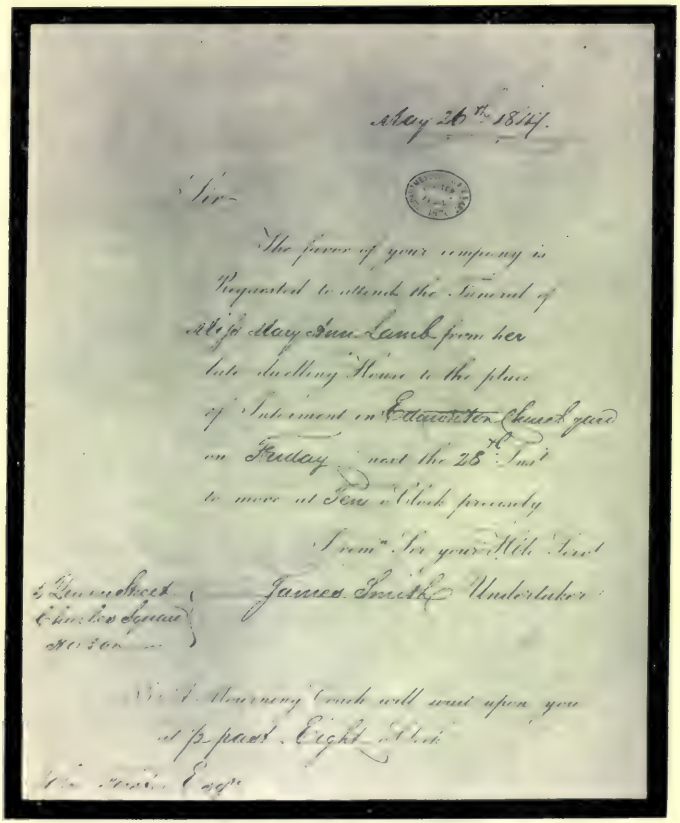
The story of the tragedy which clouded the whole after life of Mary Lamb's devoted brother has been told too often to need repetition here. His friends, Forster amongst them, if anything, loved him the more because of the sadness and the sorrow.

Then came the day when, worn out with all he had undergone, Charles Lamb yielded up his gentle spirit. It is, to my mind, not the least interesting incident in the career of Dickens's friend and life-chronicler, that he followed his quaint old friend to the grave. There is food for thought in it. John Forster, the prentice hand, and Charles Lamb, the old master-craftsman, in silent meeting for the last time. For Forster it signified the end of a notable, if brief, friendship, a friendship in its way as remarkable as any recorded in English literary history. By the courtesy of the representatives of the Board of Education at the Victoria and Albert

Museum, South Kensington, it is possible to give here a facsimile reproduction of Forster's card of invitation to the funeral of Mary Lamb which took place some years later.

With, in 1834, his moving into chambers on the ground floor of No. 58 Lincoln's Inn Fields, the career of John Forster, as writer, critic, journalist, and universal friend, may be said to have seriously begun. Old things; old friends of the old school, were passing, or—as in Lamb's case—had passed away: all things were manifestly and rapidly becoming new. New men, new ways, new ideas, were springing up on every hand, and changing the face of everything. The sorry ghost of the eighteenth century, still lingering pitifully in and about the haunts of its picturesque heyday, was at last disappearing in the dissolving rays of a new and resistless social civilisation. That Forster was ever at any time much in sympathy with the insistent progressiveness of his day, is fairly open to doubt. His mind was too deeply steeped in the spirit of the past—more particularly the historical past—to have much room for the consideration of those things which were agitating the souls of the men of his age and generation. With one important exception. His sympathies invariably went out to artistic genius, struggling against odds for recognition and appreciation.

This is especially apparent throughout his connection with Robert Browning. There was only a month or two's difference between the ages of the poet and his critic, Forster being the elder, and, in 1834, on the staff of the *Examiner* as a promising writer. In that



May 26th 1847.

Sir

The favor of your company is
Requested to attend the Funeral of
Miss Mary Ann Lamb from her
late dwelling House to the place
of Interment in Edmonton Church yard
on Friday next the 28th Inst
to move at Ten o'Clock precisely

I rem.r Sir your Hble Servt

James Smith Undertaker

2 Queen Street
Cheapside
No 30

N.B. A Mourning Coach will wait upon you
at ½ past Eight o'Clock

Mr Forster Esqr

FACSIMILE OF INVITATION TO JOHN FORSTER TO ATTEND THE FUNERAL OF MARY ANNE LAMB

same year Browning published his first poem, *Pauline*, which, although, as he himself admitted in later years, immature and crude, manifested his power to what then, and for long afterwards, was a singularly unappreciative world. That he is now in his own and proper niche in the Temple of Fame is largely due to Forster, and he never lost his feeling of grateful affection for the man who was the first to believe in him.[1] The events which led up to their acquaintance are curious, proving incontestably that life-friendships such as the one we are now considering are mainly in the nature of a chain, forged link by link, each of which is dependent the one upon the other, and growing out of it. Although Forster's life-long intimacy with Macready will be dealt with at greater length at a later stage, it is necessary, in order to make quite clear the whole story of Browning's first meeting with his kindly critic, to briefly relate the manner of Forster's introduction to Macready, who, in *his* turn, two years or so afterwards, introduced Forster to Browning. The genesis of anything is, I always think, especially interesting. It was so in the case of these three men, each destined to pre-eminence in his own line and sphere.

Macready had already, to use an Anglo-Americanism, "come to stay." Forster was fast building up a reputation as a remarkably clever writer on historical subjects, a brilliant biographer, and a just and able critic.

[1] Witness the inscription to his friend on the MS. of *Paracelsus*, given by the poet to Forster in 1842: "To John Forster, Esq. (my early understander), with true thanks for his generous and seasonable public Confession of Faith in me. R. B.
"*Hatcham, Surrey*, 1842."

Browning, it would now be universally conceded, was the one genius of the three. Forster's mission was, to be the first to discover this fact, and upon premises which did not appeal at the time to the lovers of poetry in general, or to the readers of *Pauline* in particular.

On the 25th of May, 1833, a party of men, representative of all that was most famous in the world of literature and art, were assembled in the little parlour of a tiny cottage, adjoining the Old Theatre on Richmond Green, Surrey. The reason for their being there, was, that by their presence they were paying a tribute to a little man, but a great actor—one Edmund Kean. Macready, of course, was of the number of those present, in fact it is to his Diary that I am indebted for a brief account of what took place. Whether Forster was there in his journalistic capacity; whether Macready, ever a keen observer, had his attention drawn to the earnest-looking young man with the penetrative grey eyes; or whether it was but another instance of Forster's compelling magnetism of manner, cannot very well be determined. Macready merely records that he met Forster at Kean's funeral, while it is perfectly clear, from documentary evidence—Macready's letters, his Diary, and the published work of contemporary friends of both—that the mutual relationship dated from that occasion. All Forster's friends, from Emerson and Whiteside in the old Pentonville days, to Charles Dickens, had implicit trust and confidence in him.

Everything in him inspired that feeling in others. And in no one more than in Browning. The poet's gratitude was real, not a *façon de parler* merely. His

whole heart seems to come out in all that he speaks and writes in this connection. Long years afterwards there was a temporary suspension of friendly relations, the cause of which has never been satisfactorily explained. We can imagine these two men, so different in temperament, yet so alike in the sympathetic nature of their souls, each bitterly sorrowing because of the breach between them. Browning especially would be cast down and troubled, for the poetic nature is ever the most sensitive. The very words he uses in his dedication, in 1863, of the edition of his collected works clearly proves this. The inscription runs : " I dedicate these Volumes to my Old Friend John Forster, glad and grateful that he who, from the first publication of the various poems they include, has been their promptest and staunchest helper, *should seem even nearer to me now than thirty years ago.*"

It was on the last day of 1835 that the first meeting between these two took place at the " Blue Posts " Coach Office, in Holborn.

Macready was entertaining a party of friends at his house at Elstree. It was arranged that all the guests should journey down from London in company.

With the rest went Forster and Robert Browning, as yet strangers to each other.

Forster, on being introduced to Browning by Macready, at once said to the former : " Did you see a little notice I wrote in the *Examiner?* " " Did *you* write that ? " said Browning, with an expression of eager earnestness. From that moment the bond so created between them, lasted, until the unhappy difference

clave them apart. But it was with the publication of *Paracelsus* that the great army of critics became more than ever contemptuous and even aggressive.

In this attack, the *Athenæum* led the way. This was Forster's opportunity to come to the rescue of his friend. In the *Examiner* a review of the poem appeared, written by Forster at great length, in which full justice was done to Browning's genius. I do not know if the critics of those days were differently built from the wielders of newspaper knife and scalpel in our own.

I am inclined to think they were, for a more caustic, stubborn set of men (with a few notable exceptions) never existed.

An opinion once publicly expressed, not even proof positive as to its absurdity, absence of truth, and of the writer's utter unfitness for his task, could succeed in extracting a confession of failure, or an apology for a gross perversion of the privileges of the pen. But in spite of all this, the *Examiner* review slowly but surely did its work. It was years, certainly, before Browning ascended his throne, but the intervening period saw the ever-growing preparations for the crowning-day. The shafts of prejudicially adverse criticism can now no longer hurt him.

He is above and beyond them. One writer—and one only, so far as I know, I am thankful to say—wrote harshly and contemptuously of the great Victorian poet at the celebration of his centenary this year. I regretted to read it, until I reflected that the young gentleman—he must have been a *very* young gentleman—knew absolutely nothing of his subject.

To my true friend
John Forster.

PAULINE;

A

FRAGMENT OF A CONFESSION.

Plus ne suis ce que j'ai été,
Et ne le sçaurois jamais être.
MAROT.

LONDON:
SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.
1833.

FACSIMILE OF TITLE-PAGE OF THE COPY OF "PAULINE" PRESENTED TO JOHN FORSTER BY ROBERT BROWNING

Such criticism—if criticism it be—would not, it is morally certain, have made Forster to turn a hair, neither as certainly would Browning have been disturbed by it. Both he and his friend had a sovereign contempt for the criticism born of ignorance, and I am afraid that in this particular instance, the young man in question must have been very ignorant indeed.

So great an interest did Forster take in *Pauline*, and, by consequence, in its author, that he sent to Browning to borrow a copy of it.—" Convey, the wise it call." It was Browning's own annotated copy, containing, also, one or two notes on other matters by himself, and, on the last flyleaf, some curious analytically-critical notes on the poem in pencil, by John Stuart Mill. The book was never returned, Browning later on confirming the " conveyance " by his silent acquiescence. It has his signature on the title-page, which is reproduced here in facsimile, by special permission, as are all similar reproductions from books and letters in the Forster Collection. This copy of the poem is now regarded as one of the priceless treasures of the Forster Bequest, ranking as such with Swift's own annotated copy of the first edition of *Gulliver's Travels;* his Diary, and the original MS. of Browning's *Paracelsus*.

Speaking of literary treasures, reminds one, too, of another book, originally given by Browning's father, a man of pronounced literary tastes, to his son, who subsequently made a present of it to Forster. This is a very fine copy of the first edition of *Shakespeare's Richard III*. It is in perfect preservation, and is additionally interesting as having been at one time

owned by Edmund Kean. How it came into the elder Browning's possession it is impossible to say. Sufficient that, by Forster's generous gift to the nation, it has found a final resting-place at South Kensington, safe from all Transatlantic troubling, and the acquisitiveness that would—an it could—rend from us the choicest of those things that belong to us as of right, and to us alone.

Macready was ever a sincere admirer of Browning's poetic genius, and during his tenancy of the great patent theatre, produced *The Blot on the Scutcheon*, and *Strafford*.

Considered as literature, both these plays were undoubtedly worthy of Browning's now acknowledged reputation as a poet of the first rank.

Regarded as drama, we are forced, howsoever unwillingly, to the conclusion, that the gift of dramatic insight, (without which, and the necessary technique, no writer of plays for stage representation can possibly hope for recognition and success,) was not Browning's.

Lacking the instinct, he could not see things from a dramatic point of view, hence his practical and admitted failure as a writer of plays for the stage. It was the same with Tennyson. Without Irving's genius to infuse the necessary dramatic soul into *Queen Mary*, and *Becket*, what would have been the fate of these plays? Fine literary productions, yes—drama, no! There is no definite evidence to prove it, but it is just possible that the unfortunate misunderstanding between

Forster and his friend, had its origin in advice given by the former to the poet on the subject of his plays.

Forster, as has been said, *had* the dramatic instinct, although (except once, in his boyhood's days) he never wrote a play.

Any advice he might have given to Browning would be sure to have been sound. Browning would, as surely, have resented it—in spite of his affectionate regard for Forster. That any such advice was given at all, is merely a suggestion, which may or may not have any determinative value. One thing we do know, that when Forster died, he had no truer mourner, no one who sorrowed more, with the sorrow of a great, tender, full heart, than Robert Browning.

Macready's friendship with John Forster has always been a puzzle. The great actor had in himself, as part of himself, those very same repressive qualities, which, in Forster's case, were only on the surface, superficial, skin-deep. There was always, so at least it seems to me, the danger of Forster's "hard" manner reacting unfavourably upon Macready's somewhat overbearing nature, or that Forster's patience, born of his calm, even temperament, might exhaust itself by reason of some sustained fit of ill-temper on the part of the actor. The wonder remains, therefore, that two men, one really, the other superficially only, cast, as it were, in the same mould, should, as we know they did, live through a life-long friendship in perfect peace and amity. It says much for the forbearance of both, and for the

reality and strength of their regard, the one for the other. It was a notable instance of like consorting with like, and being therewith content. Proverb-mongers and their kind take note and ponder: it is worth while. Of the "two Macs," as Dickens in the exuberance of his early days, loved to call them—the actor, Macready, and the artist, Maclise—Macready, it is curious to note, alone maintained, without a break, to the end, his friendly relations with Dickens and Forster. One would have thought that the lovable, simple-hearted painter would be more likely to retain his hold upon the affectionate regards of his two friends than would Macready, the emotional in whose nature savoured more of the "footlights" than of the "light of life." That it should not have been so, is one of those strange, unaccountable things familiar to the experience of almost every one, in a world where the strange and the unaccountable is as the air we breathe.

For instance, what a strange first-meeting-place, the coffin-side of the great actor-genius! Forster always regarded it in this light. It touched his imagination.

It is not clear whether he had ever seen Edmund Kean act; it is of course impossible that he could ever have done so in Kean's prime. The dead actor was a tradition only to him, but a tradition to be cherished as a memory almost sacred. That he and Macready should, as it were, have first joined hands over the coffin of Edmund Kean, was one of those dramatic moments in the history of human friendship, the real meaning and value of which cannot easily be over-estimated.

Macready, who belonged to a totally different dramatic



WILLIAM CHARLES MACREADY

From an engraving of the miniature by R. Thornton, A.R.A.



ROBERT BROWNING

From an engraving by J. C. Armytage

school from Kean, was, as he records in his Diary, moved beyond measure at the sad and sorrowful passing of one, who, had he so willed, might have gone down to posterity, not as the great artist only, but as a great man. Absolutely a stranger to self-control, he not only embittered and shortened his own life, but was the cause of untold misery to those near and dear to him. Heredity, undoubtedly, was largely to blame for it, when we consider what his parentage was. The story of Nance Carey, his mother, is not a savoury one. From his birth, dragged about the country, with habitual drunkenness ever present to his little eyes and mind, it is not surprising that an evil heritage was his unhappy lot. My own father, born the year before Trafalgar, has often told me of the great little man struggling against the consequences of his fatal infirmity while playing one of Shakespeare's creations.

Through it all shone the genius of the man, until, mentally and physically a wreck, he collapsed in the arms of his son, and never played again. In years just under forty he died as one old before his time, the wife of his youth, whom he had driven from him, returning to receive his last sigh, and to whisper forgiveness to his soul. It was a tragedy of the stage which would be sure to appeal to Forster, so that it was not, I think, inappropriate that he and Macready, an actor of a different calibre altogether, should begin their long friendship in such fashion.

Forster was a constant visitor to the actor-manager's dressing-room at the theatre.

Eminently useful to him as a writer on the *Examiner*,

the *True Sun*, and other papers, Macready, as is evident from numberless entries in his Diary, liked to have his young friend about him. It is common knowledge that he relied much upon his sound judgment and common-sense in matters relating to the literary side of his managerial enterprise. He rarely, if ever, disputed the wisdom of the other's conclusions, and was at all times ready to serve him. This is, no doubt, high praise for Forster, but it was deserved. Like the majority of mortals, he made his mistakes. The few to be placed to the credit of John Forster were of the head mostly, not of the heart, which cannot be said of some of those *unco guid* people, who so often contrive to trip up, not only themselves, but their friends, in their desperate endeavour to be not as other folk are. Macready's death came as a great blow to Forster. But apart from his mourning for the man, it meant for him the snapping of another link with the happy, never-to-be-forgotten past, a past hallowed by the brightest of memories. After Macready's retirement to Cheltenham, his few remaining friends saw comparatively little of him.

It was so with Forster, who, occupied to the full with important literary work, and with health not by any means of the best, had neither the time nor the inclination for mere friendly visiting. The idea seems to be in these days, that Forster had but one friend, viz.—Charles Dickens. The truth is, that he was everybody's friend, and, that of the legion of his intimates, none stood higher in his regard than William Charles Macready, actor, gentleman, and scholar.

To this let us add, true, sincere friend.

The little parlour of the cottage next door to the old theatre on Richmond Green, saw the inception of a friendship between two men, the ending of which was (as it should ever be) even as the beginning.

Chapter III: *The Carlyles and Mazzini*

FROM the little known about Thomas Carlyle—that is to say, his inner self; the soul of the man—it is difficult to conceive him as needing, or acknowledging kindness from any human being. A few words, occurring in a letter written by him to Forster in April, 1851, largely dispels this illusion, and goes to prove, that far from non-appreciation of the sympathy and good-will of his brother man, he was so deeply sensible of Forster's friendly help in any and every emergency, that he feels impelled to give vent to his feelings, and express his heartfelt gratitude without let or stint.

"Good be with you, dear Forster!" he writes. "A right kind remembrance remains with me of all your kindness to me." Reading between the lines, we cannot but notice here a deep sense of obligation to the friend who never failed him; who patiently bore with him when he was most trying and cantankerous, and who deliberately refused to quarrel on any pretext, or for any reason whatsoever.

The irritating thing about Carlyle is his habit of not dating his letters. This makes it very difficult to place the matters referred to in them in their proper order as to date and sequence. Much of his correspondence

was conducted by Mrs. Carlyle, and when this was the case, the letters were nearly always dated. What a wife she was!

Clever beyond the average; patient to a degree; delighting in self-sacrifice; a firm believer in her husband's genius, she knew exactly how to play upon the pipes of his nature. That she would under other and more favourable conditions have given something worth having to the world, is morally certain. But it was not to be. Subordinating her own aims, desires, ambitions, her dreamings—her very life, to the convenience of the man who, in this year of 1912, is, in spite of our boasted higher education, in spite, too, of a certain amount of opinion to the contrary, less understood of the people than he was in his own day, Jane Welsh Carlyle will go down in literary history as the one woman in ten thousand.

Forster understood Carlyle, the fact that he did so accounting for much in the closeness of their mutual personal relationship. But what strange thinkings had the man from Ecclefechan! These thoughts of his—often weirdly and wonderfully expressed—overflowed from his books into his letters.

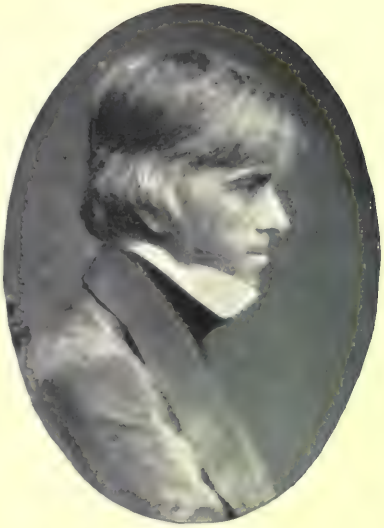
This is what he says to Forster in one of those characteristic holograph epistles he was in the habit every now and then of firing off at his friend. It was in the early days when horse exercise was a favourite recreation. "I have," he writes, "got my horse back again" (implying that for some reason, possibly that of economy, he had been without a "mount" for a time), "and have twice seen the blue sky; ascertained to my infinite

satisfaction, that God's universe is not all a puddle of dust, smoke, uproar, and mad gabblement, but has fields, trees, silence, and eternal azure over it. I am literally, horribly bilious (reading the Koran, too), but will write it out of me."

In this same letter he confesses himself to be an enthusiastic admirer of Dickens.

Chuzzlewit was then coming out in the familiar green-covered monthly parts. It comes almost as a shock to know, that the Sage of Chelsea, the Philosopher of Cheyne Row, looked forward eagerly for the next *Chuzzlewit* part, and that he read it as religiously as any ordinary member of the reading public might have done. His friend's own biography of Oliver Goldsmith came in, too, for practically unqualified praise. "Except Boswell's Johnson," he goes on to say, "there is no biography in the English language worth naming beside it." Carlyle and Forster seem on their first acquaintance at once to have become fast friends, Carlyle never failing to see through the rugged husk of the other to the real man within. It was Forster's very sincerity that, to the unthinking mind, made him oftentimes to appear blunt to rudeness.

Quick brains are invariably impatient, and even irritable, and without a doubt Forster was both. But then, his self-control and sense of discipline were so perfect, and acted so admirably as a check upon his natural impatience and irritability, that for all practical purposes they were completely subordinated and restrained. Carlyle was just the man to recognise and appreciate this mental operation, and to appraise it at



THOMAS CARLYLE
From a photograph, 1854



JANE WELCH CARLYLE
From a miniature by K. Macleay, R.S.A.

its proper value. He himself did not possess this power of self-restraint, at least, not to any great extent. Always "speaking his mind," regardless of consequences, he was oblivious, and, for that matter, quite indifferent as to whether his words hurt or not. The *suaviter in modo* was not his—except—and the exceptions, it must be confessed, were not many—in the case of his intimates, of whom Forster was undoubtedly chief. The Carlyle of his letters to his friend, is an altogether different being to the Carlyle as he was, and is known among men. In his letters he completely puts off the harsh, repelling manner, usual with him in his intercourse with his kind, and exhibits a kindliness of soul, an almost touching brotherliness, that makes quite as much for sympathy as for wonder, in those privileged to read his correspondence with Forster in the original. He was always peculiarly sensitive with regard to any special act of thoughtfulness on the part, say, of Forster himself. As when he writes to acknowledge the receipt from his friend of some particularly choice "Assyrian" tobacco. He was, as is well known, devoted to the "weed," and would, therefore, fully appreciate such a present, coming, too, from whom it did.

"I will," he writes, "straightway smoke a pipe in honour of you before going into the sun! Many thanks to the brave Forster, and may his shadow never grow less."

In pipes he mostly affected the old-fashioned "churchwarden," beloved of many country-inn frequenters, even to this day.

Even in the character of critic, where his friend's own literary work is concerned, there is the same kindly dealing, although he never allows friendship to blind his eyes to the truth. He is faithful alike to his friend and to his duty. A rare combination when we come to think of it, and when found to be made a note of. In 1849, we find him writing to Forster about the latter's *Life of Strafford*, in *Statesmen of the Commonwealth*.

"You know me," he says, "as one not given to compliments; but I cannot help saying, that I did feel myself to be reading a right faithful piece of investigation—by far the truest picture ever given of that man. This is my verdict after second reading." His final word in the same letter, is rather suggestive.

"Have been three days at British Museum (Reading-Room) and have my Museum headache."

Carlyle is not the only one who has suffered in this way. Even now, after many so-called improvements, the ventilation in the Reading-Room is far from being perfect.

He always dreaded working there, putting off the evil day as long as possible.

When, in 1848, the Italian irreconcilable, Guiseppe Mazzini, brought a letter of introduction to Mrs. Carlyle, that lady, petting and making much of the exile, strove in every way to interest her friends in him. It was only a matter of time and opportunity, that he and Forster should be brought together. And this for two good reasons.

Forster was then—had been, indeed, for many a year—Editor-in-Chief of the *Examiner*, Albany Fonblanque having resigned in his favour.

As such, he would be in a likely position to render certain service to Mazzini, should the need arise. Then, the Italian's somewhat picturesque personality would be sure to attract Forster. Certainly we have it, on the authority of both Carlyle and his wife, that the latter, at any rate, was peculiarly and intensely interested in Mazzini. She spared no pains to interest Forster also, as many of her letters show.

Carlyle himself also seems to have been brought within the charmed circle of Mazzini's personal influence. On one occasion he writes Forster to borrow *Barrow's Wanderings in Lombardy* for his wife's protégé. A trifling action, perhaps, but signifying much, seeing who and what manner of man Carlyle really was.

Carlyle, by the way, was a self-confessed "libertine" as a borrower of books. Years before in writing to Forster he says: "I am a Rob Roy in books, and levy blackmail on all my friends. Think of calling some day to make a new forage among your bookshelves." Whether *Barrow's Wanderings* ever found its way back to Forster's bookshelves it is impossible to say.

Probably not, if its restoration depended upon Carlyle. Mazzini, in the minds of most men in England at that time, was a political Mephistopheles of the most pronounced type. As a matter of fact, the "terrible revolutionary" was really an unassuming, mild-mannered

Italian gentleman; exceptionally so, his Southern blood considered. In these days he would be regarded as a very harmless individual indeed, with ideas not a whit more inflammatory than those of the ordinary Liberal of *not* too advanced opinions.

More, he was essentially a kind-hearted man, with a strong love for his fellow creatures, especially those who might be in sorrow or trouble, and who needed sympathy and help.

Writing to Forster to excuse himself for not calling upon him according to appointment, he pleads as a reason the having been engaged in championing the cause of a young compatriot, then lying in Newgate, charged with stabbing a fellow countryman in the East End. He argued that the Southern temperament ought to be taken into account in such cases, and, that in this particular instance there was the notable extenuating circumstance that the accused lad—he seems to have been quite young—had received decided provocation. To give his help and sympathy in a matter of this kind was as the "delight of life" to Mazzini, himself a political outlaw with a price upon his head. It was, too, distinctly typical of his nature, of his simple single-heartedness, to be read of all men with whom he came in contact. Forster, more than most, would be likely to recognise this trait in the character of his Italian friend, and be only too ready to accept such a reason, as being quite sufficient for complete absolution.

This brief friendship between the historian of the Commonwealth, and Giuseppe Mazzini, the history-

maker during Italy's most troublous time, is more than a mere coincidence; it is a notable and significant fact in the literary and political records of both nations, which it would be unjust, as it is impossible, to ignore.

The brief acquaintance of Forster and Mazzini was, after all, but an episode, a comparatively nebulous one, in the former's greater friendship with the Carlyles. I have often thought, that if Forster had but survived his friend, what a wonderful life of him he could have written.

And yet, it is doubtful whether he would have undertaken another modern biography.

He lived in the past; his soul was in it, and although his literary tributes to Dickens and Landor were, in a sense, demanded of him, I cannot but believe that in his heart of hearts he regarded the time occupied in writing these *Lives* as so many days, weeks, months—years even—deducted from his opportunities in connection with that old world and its worthies that he loved so well.

In 1848, Daniel O'Connell in the English House of Commons, and "on stump" in his own country, was bellowing out a never-ending stream of frothy rhodomontade, the real meaning and object of which, no man, not even the "Liberator" himself, understood, or could possibly hope to understand. With regard to the "great" Irishman's mission and methods, Carlyle, according to a letter of his to Forster, bearing date the 21st of October of that fateful year, was wholly and sternly anti-sympathetic. Philosophically, of course,

he was a reformer, social and political, but he could not away with the blatant bullying of O'Connell. It offended his common-sense; it tried him; and made him angry, that any sane Englishman, or Irishman, could be so foolish as to be overpersuaded by the unmistakable blarney in it. In the same month next year, when Macaulay's historical fragment was fluttering the critical dovecotes, along came a letter from Carlyle to Forster mercilessly cutting-up my Lord Macaulay's book, and, metaphorically, smiting it hip and thigh. "What do I think of it?" he writes. "Not much!" The fine writing; the splendid imagery; the picturesque descriptions, did not appeal to Carlyle at all. They were, indeed, the basis and ground of his indictment, that it was not history, but romance.

It was the same in 1855, when, on March the 12th, he wrote in high indignation on the cause and results of the War in the Crimea.

In his view war was always hideous; this one, from the very beginning, especially so. "Hideous, my dear Forster! all as hideous as it can well be," he says in effect.

Were he but alive now, he would, I suppose, be a prominent member of the Peace Committee at the Hague. And yet, I don't know, for his natural pugnacity would certainly impel him to fight to a finish, for the victory, which, as he would conceive it, ought to be his.

One can well imagine his righteous wrath at the muddle of that extraordinary campaign.

Napoleon the Little playing his own game in the



GIUSEPPE MAZZINI

From an engraving by H. Meyer of the portrait by J. Henshaw

sacred name of friendly co-operation must have roused his ire, did indeed rouse it, while the thousands of lives sacrificed through sheer official mismanagement, caused him to "shed tears of blood," in whole-hearted, if helpless sympathy and pity. When matters such as these were in question, Carlyle was like to a volcano in unstemable protestive eruption. His fiery denunciations poured forth resistless as a stream of glowing molten lava. Men read, but they did not mark or learn—they just wondered for a day, perhaps, out of the proverbial nine; and then, a going on in the same old way, to the same old tune. To pour all his indignations into Forster's friendly ear, when all the rest of the world was deaf to them, was a wonderful relief to his much-moved soul. At least he knew that his friend would patiently listen, even if he could not always agree. But these were times when it was not all "tilting at windmills," as in the Crimean War matter, and when Forster was in complete accord with the man whose chief joy was the unmasking of evil and wrong-doing, even if sometimes, in his zeal for the right and best, he put his finger on the wrong spot. Peace be to his memory, as a great Briton who has not yet come into his own, and to that of his wife, Jane Welsh Carlyle, truest of true women; than which said, there can be no more to say. And Forster; peace be to him also, for without him Carlyle's life would not have been complete; the misanthrope in him would have developed and become dominant.

Forster played the part assigned him in the general scheme of things, and played it well.

To have been the friend of Carlyle, to have been necessary to him, to have been the recipient of his confidences, in little things as in great, was an honour fully recognised and appreciated by Forster, whose mind, analytically considered, was, to a certain extent, formed in like mould. Carlyle's periodic outbursts of fiery indignation were, of course, impossible in the case of Forster, the latter's calm, even, almost passionless temperament, and his legal way of looking at things, making for a marked difference in the mental equipment, as in the literary methods of the two men. The one and only possible conclusion therefore to which we can come, is, in my humble opinion, that Carlyle without Forster would have lacked something not quite easy to define, but akin to mind-balance, if not exactly that. It was, as I have said before, the dependability of Forster which made him so valuable as a friend, Hence, Carlyle's regard for him. But Forster without Carlyle would still have been Forster, lacking nothing. It was he who was necessary to others, not others to him, and in that fact lies the secret of the success of his friendships generally, and particularly so, as I have endeavoured to point out, and make clear, in the case of his intimacy with Thomas Carlyle.

One personal memory I have of Carlyle in the autumn of his life, which I treasure perhaps more than anything else. I cannot fix the date, for it is so long ago, and the insistences of a long and busy literary life have pressed so many things—dates especially—out of my recollection. Anyway, as nearly as I can remember, I was passing eastwards early one morning, about eight o'clock,

along the new Chelsea embankment, close by the Albert Bridge at the foot of Oakley Street, not very long after the death of John Forster in 1876. Leaning with folded arms on the parapet, and apparently in deep meditation, was a figure garbed in a long loose cloak, with, wrapped round his shoulders, a large black and green Scotch plaid. If I remember rightly his shortish trousers were of the same plaid, while his head-gear was a soft, circular, large-brimmed wideawake hat. Although I was aware that this was his early morning habit, for the moment his identity with Thomas Carlyle did not occur to me. When fairly abreast of him, he suddenly turned round and faced me. Then I knew him. There was ever something awe-inspiring in the intentness of Carlyle's gaze. His eyes seemed to burn into your very soul. It was so now. I stood like an idiot, open-mouthed.

I should as soon have thought of assaulting as of addressing him. Happily, I was spared anything of the kind, for the old man, reserved as he was to the point of moroseness—surliness his enemies called it—hoarsely flung a query at me. The tide was out, I may mention, the river being at its lowest. "Where goes it ?—Where goes it ?"

The very manner of his saying it, sharpened my wits, and I gathered, of course, that he referred to the stream, or what there was of it.

Smilingly I replied that it returned to the sea.

"Right, sir, right !" he snapped out. Then relapsing into his meditative mood, he said softly, but impressively, "The great, great sea of God Almighty's goodness, and we are all returning that way. Don't

forget that, sir! returning to the sea—the great illimitable sea!" With that, he abruptly turned away, and moved across the roadway towards Cheyne Row, with that curious slow shuffle habitual with him, and I saw him no more.

Chapter IV: *The Two Triumvirates*

THE genesis of a notable friendship, the friendship of two famous men, is always interesting. Christmas, 1836, that saw the introduction to each other of Charles Dickens and John Forster, may be marked down as a date ever memorable; a Red Letter Day in the history of English Literature. They were both young, twenty-four, in fact, Dickens being the elder by a month or two. To William Harrison Ainsworth belongs the honour of bringing these two kindred spirits together, though it is a nice question whether he could really have foreseen the full importance of the introduction. Mr. B. M. Ellis has told the story of this first meeting in his book, published in 1910, *William Harrison Ainsworth and His Friends*, to whom, and to which, I am greatly indebted for being able to make this critical period in the careers of Dickens and Forster particularly clear and understandable. It is comparatively an easy matter to set down mechanically certain facts relating to this or that person, and label the result Biography of So-and-so. It is quite another thing to place before the reader a living picture; people of real flesh and blood, in a setting which shall help the imagination to re-create the past in such a way, as to

reproduce before the eye of the mind the moving, breathing drama enacted years ago, and upon which the curtain has long since descended.

To pursue the simile Ainsworth may be said to have played the part of Chorus, the one who introduces, explains, and virtually holds the piece together during the First Act, that is. It is unnecessary here to go into the matter of his separate acquaintance with Dickens and Forster previous to the Christmas meeting at Kensal Lodge. That is fully dealt with by Mr. Ellis in his book, to which I refer the reader. That which more nearly concerns us at this particular point, are those things only having direct reference to what may be termed "the First Triumvirate, the members of which were Ainsworth, Dickens and Forster." Mr. Ellis is partially right when he says, that with regard to Forster's *Life of Dickens:* "One may perhaps express a personal regret that the biographer devotes but a few words to the social or convivial phase of Dickens in these first glorious years of youth and fame. He barely mentions the frequent rides through the lovely country surrounding the suburbs of London, which Dickens delighted to take in company with his two intimates, Forster and Ainsworth; and the even more frequent dinings and festivities the trio enjoyed go almost unrecorded. Certainly the dinner in celebration of the completion of *Pickwick*—when the *pièce de résistance* was a glittering temple of confectionery, beneath the canopy of which stood a little figure of Mr. Pickwick, gaiters and all complete—deserved one word for pleasant memory's sake."



CHARLES DICKENS (1839

From an engraving by Finden of a painting by Daniel Maclise, R.A.

In connection with the foregoing quotation from an article—" Dickens and Forster "—by Mr. Ellis, in the February number, 1912, of *Chambers' Journal*, I have used the term "*partially* right," and for this reason, that, the real " blank " in Forster's brief—it must be confessed, very brief—account of the outings, the rides, the dinings and convivial foregatherings, is the omission of any mention of Ainsworth as having been a sharer in these " fearful joys." Forster, in a space of little more than a page, touches lightly on the subject and quotes extracts from several of Dickens's letters to himself, but in every case, and throughout the whole reference to the matter, Ainsworth's name does not once appear, and this although Forster's comments and quotations are date-covered, 1837, the first year of the famous first triple alliance. It is in the nature of a curious coincidence, that this tripartite friendship should have had but a close and intimate continuance of *three* years—1836 to 1839.

Friendly relations, to a certain extent, there always were, to the end—friendly feeling I am inclined to term it—but for reasons which Mr. Ellis fully explains in his *Life*, it was Ainsworth who drifted away, never again to come into intimate touch with his two old friends. He survived them both, and those who had known him in the days of his fame and glory as the one writer of his generation, of historical novels who could be sure of his popularity and who lived to see that quiet, unpretentious funeral pass silently along the Harrow Road; pass within hail of Kensal Lodge, his one-time happy home, must have felt saddened as they realised

that it was William Harrison Ainsworth's last journey; that it meant that "Finis" was being written to his own Book of Life, and that that Book was now closed for ever. At least such were my thoughts as I stood and saw the mournful procession pass silently on its way. And these thoughts remain with me even unto this day, and will remain.

But we are more concerned now with the happy, careless, almost irresponsible life of this Triumvirate of kindred souls, lived during the three memorable years immediately subsequent to that Christmas meeting of 1836.

I altogether refuse to believe that Ainsworth was not of the party in at least some of those riding and pedestrian expeditions to which Forster refers in the *Life*. The numerous invitations from Dickens to Forster to ride, walk, drive, must, I am convinced, often have included the third member of the Triumvirate, for it is undoubtedly certain that during the three years in question it was share and share alike with them. That first meeting at Kensal Lodge was but typical of many such another, when, in the flush of a developed friendship, full enjoyment of the passing day was the one thing which concerned these three young men, "eat, drink, and be merry" their motto.

Although, in November, 1838, he had given his two friends introductions to the more famous literary men of his native Manchester, Ainsworth did not accompany them thither until January, 1839. On this latter occasion Dickens and Ainsworth were fêted, and dined, and made much of by everybody in Manchester who

was anybody. Hugh Beaver, a relative of Ainsworth's, was their host, while James Crossley, known to them all, dined and wined the trio of distinguished visitors from the metropolis.

It was on the first occasion, the year before, that Dickens met the prototypes of his Cheeryble Brothers in *Nicholas Nickleby*, in the persons of William and David Grant, two quaint benevolent merchants of Manchester.

Gilbert Winter, another friend of Ainsworth's, arranged a special meeting between these gentlemen and Dickens, whose express object in this visit was to see these two Manchester worthies.

At a dinner at Gilbert's place, Stocks House, Cheetham Hill, the meeting duly materialised, not only to Dickens's satisfaction and delight, but to that of the tens of thousands of *Nicholas Nickleby* readers ever since. No doubt, as Mr. Ellis suggests, during the 1838 visit, young Hablot K. Browne—the Phiz of the future—made sketches of the brothers, *sub rosa*, from the originals. On the second occasion, in the following year, Dickens again met the Grants, thus having another opportunity for studying his models for the Cheeryble Brothers at first hand. This visit of the three friends to Manchester was one of the last enjoyable expeditions taken by them in company. With his ever-increasing popularity, Dickens became absorbed in his proportionately increasing literary responsibilities. Then, too, new friends were made; and new ties, more or less of an intimate character, formed, overshadowing and ultimately superseding the old.

For instance, the clever young artist, Daniel Maclise, was, in 1838, introduced by Forster to Dickens. The latter, from the outset, clave to his new friend, with all the enthusiastic affection of a David for his Jonathan. Mac, as the other almost at once nicknamed him, entered, in less than a year, into all the rights, privileges, and enjoyments of the "inseparables." The original Triumvirate, towards the close of 1839, becoming temporarily unworkable, the young Scots painter stepped naturally into Ainsworth's place. It was a case of Maclise promoted, *vice* Ainsworth "dropped out." Not that unpleasantness of any kind was the result of the new order of things; it was simply that the ancient "New Lamps for Old" tradition still holds good; that the "new *versus* old faces" theory is to-day as widely believed in and practised as at any time during the past five hundred years.

But it was when the editorial reins of *Bentley's Miscellany* were transferred from Dickens to Ainsworth, at the close of 1839, that the busy idlers in the literary world of London set a rumour afloat, which, although perfectly baseless, and, *per se*, unauthorised, was, for a time, the cause of much pain and annoyance to, at least, one person—John Forster. When it is unsupported by any trustworthy corroboration, rumour, howsoever plausible, may safely be assumed to be the liar it is generally said to be. Owing to what he considered to be a breach of his agreement with Bentley, Dickens severed all connection with the publisher; repurchased his copyright of *Oliver Twist*, cancelled his agreement for *Barnaby Rudge*, and, of course, by these acts, ceased,

automatically, to be editor of *Bentley's Miscellany.* Then went abroad the rumour.

Forster, it was said, had persuaded Dickens to break his agreement. To those who knew the former, this suggestion would at once appear as being palpably absurd, and altogether impossible. He was absolutely incapable of exercising any such persuasion, Dickens himself taking up the cudgels on behalf of his friend, and in a lengthy letter to Ainsworth indignantly repudiating the charge. Far from doing anything of the sort, Forster wrote Ainsworth advising him strongly *not* to take over the editorship of the *Miscellany* just resigned by Dickens. That fact alone should be sufficient to disprove any suspicion of underhand dealing on the part of Forster. Mr. Ellis, in his *Chambers* article, relates an incident connected with the first Manchester expedition. The three travelling companions, Dickens, Forster and Hablot Browne (Phiz), made an excursion to Cheadle Hall, Cheshire, to see the three little daughters of Ainsworth, who were at a boarding-school there. The girls and all the members of the London party were total strangers. The three young men, all in their " twenties," each brought books as a present—a peace offering—for each of the youthful maidens, aged respectively eight, nine and eleven. The children had been mischievously misinformed by a wicked-minded school-fellow that the " severe-looking gentleman "—Forster—was the dentist on business bent. When he stepped forward, therefore, one of the little girls gave vent to an exceeding bitter cry, it being some time before she could be persuaded that Forster's

intentions were friendly; that the man from the *Examiner* was not an examiner of teeth. Once convinced of this, peace reigned again, and all went merry as a marriage-bell. I quite admit it to be a pity that Forster did not give more space in his book to these pleasant early days and nights of congenial intimacy, those "jolly good times," in which, during the life of the first Triumvirate, Ainsworth must have been a frequent and happy participant. And yet, in some degree, there was an excuse for it, for it must never be forgotten that when the *Life* was written, most of the old friendships were things of the past, and the old friends themselves, many of them, "under the turf." It was but natural that Forster should treat his subject from the point of view of his own personal nearness to Dickens. I really think that this way of looking at it is the only just and equitable one.

To call it egotism and prejudice, that the biographer should have willingly, deliberately even, ignored many claims to recognition and appreciation, is, after all, judging from superficialities, and consequently both unjust and unsound. Forster loved Dickens too well to be unjust, either to him or to those who had been his friends, while his logical, evenly balanced mind was incapable of producing anything unsound, or that savoured in the least of ill-regulated, loosely-thought-out construction. It may be said, perhaps, that I have dwelt too long upon this subject. If I have it is only because I wished to do what justice I might to Ainsworth and others who find little or no place in Forster's book, and to Forster himself, who, if he erred in this

respect, did so, not willingly, or of malice aforethought, but for the reasons I have ventured to advance as probable, and which certainly have the virtue of possibility, in spite of much that has been said to the contrary.

Had Ainsworth not formed one in the first Triumvirate, it would have concerned me not at all; but inasmuch as he was intimately connected with it, it became necessary to include in my description every member of both trios. Nearly all that has here to be said about Dickens is confined to his association with Forster, save and except where, in addition to the latter, he is companioned, first with Ainsworth, and, secondly, with Maclise. Mr. Ellis has, as already said, dealt so admirably and exhaustively with Ainsworth, as a member of the first friendly association, that there is practically little or nothing more worth saying to be said about it.

There is one most remarkable thing in connection with the friendship of Dickens and Forster, viz. its uninterrupted continuity, as a fellowship of two souls, each supremely happy and content, the one with the other, and, in a sense, "the world forgetting."

No one understood either of them so well as each understood the other. Of the two, perhaps, Dickens was the more exacting; Forster the more ready to advise and suggest. But it was all upon an assured basis of natural "give and take." There may have been times, there certainly were, during their long and stormless intimacy, when their respective views on any particular matter or subject were not quite in accord, but they always agreed to differ. It was, in fact, the ideal friend-

ship, which, I take it, should not consist of a slavish subordination of taste or opinion on the part of one of the parties to the other, a state of things which, sooner or later, must inevitably result in revolt, and dissolution.

That there was nothing of this kind in the bond that bound Dickens and Forster so closely together for the best part of forty years, is evident on the face of it. The results were of the best, not alone for themselves, but for their fellow men and women for all time. Without doubt there was strong mutual attraction. Forster, indeed, says as much; while the undeniable proof of it was there, in that both were unsatisfied, until after several unsuccessful efforts made by each to get the other to his house. Forster for the first time dined with Dickens at Hampstead, whither the latter had removed for necessary change of scene. Hampstead is full of memories of both the friends.

Even in the modern edition of Jack Straw's Castle, there is still a certain atmosphere of Dickens and his doings hanging mysteriously about the place, which obstinately refuses to dissipate. It is the same with The Spaniards, with the important difference, that, in almost every essential, the old inn of the Spaniards is precisely as it has been, any time these past two hundred years or more. To stand upon the well-worn flagstones of its low-ceiling'd bar, through the old-fashioned, narrow-paned lattices of the window of which one can, on a clear day, see four counties, sends back the mind, with a rush, to those days of long ago, when Starlight Dick, and many another knight of the road, would dismount for a drink, and, perhaps, a kiss from the peony-cheeked



JOHN FORSTER (1840)

From a drawing by Daniel Maclise, R.A.

landlord's daughter, before riding across the Heath, to call "Stand and deliver!" to some well-furnished citizen of London Town, who would have something to talk about, in and out of season, for the remainder of his days. Dickens would, and doubtless did delight in imaginings such as these; delight, too, in discussing it all with Forster. This visit to Hampstead, the opening one of their friendship, must have been—*was*, according to Forster, the chronicler—especially enjoyable to both host and guest. "His heart opened itself to mine," records the latter. "I left him as much his friend, and as entirely in his confidence, as if I had known him for years. Nor had many weeks passed before he addressed to me from Doughty Street words which it is my sorrowful pride to remember have had literal fulfilment. 'I look back with unmingled pleasure to every link which each ensuing week has added to the chain of our attachment. It shall go hard, I hope, 'ere anything but Death impairs the toughness of a bond now so firmly riveted.' It remained unweakened until death came." And again: "It was your feeling for me, and mine for you, that first brought us together, and I hope will keep us so 'till death do us part.'"

From this time onward, circumstances drew them into closer, and more frequent communication.

After this nothing was written by Dickens which Forster did not see before the world did, either in MS. or proofs. In this connection it is curious to note, that Dickens was peculiarly susceptible to disturbing sounds and noises.

"If you know anybody at St. Paul's," he writes, "I

wish you'd send round and ask them not to ring the bell so. I can hardly hear my own ideas as they come into my head, and say what they mean." If the overpowering noises became too unbearable, he would send round to his *alter ego* some such message as this : " Come, come, *come*, and walk in the green lanes. . . . Come ! I shall expect you." Or, " You don't feel disposed, do you, to muffle yourself up, and start off with me for a good brisk walk over Hampstead Heath," and so on.

Of all forms of exercise, riding was, I think, his favourite. Richmond, Twickenham, Greenwich, Windsor, and Hampstead as aforesaid, were well-loved haunts of his, to be reached on horseback, in company with Forster, and after 1838, sometimes with Maclise. An early chop at some snug village inn, had in it all the elements of sheer physical enjoyment for him. He literally revelled in these extemporised and homely feasts. No elaborate menu, no French kickshaws, no unwholesome gastronomic eccentricities.

He loved plain, unadulterate fare, honest English cookery : give him that and he was more than satisfied, he was grateful. Much has been said and written about the alleged undue prominence in his books given to the so-called glorification of mere eating and drinking, but a little trouble taken to search out such references would, I think, result in finding that in nearly every case, the food so *glorified* was of the very plainest, whilst, with regard to the consumption of liquor by certain of his characters, it should always be remembered, that the days of which he writes were essentially the days of heavy and hard drinking; that he was but painting a

true-to-the-life and conscientious picture, and doing his duty as a faithful chronicler.

The close of 1839 saw Maclise firmly established as a member of the second Triumvirate. A word or two with regard to the parentage and early days of the future Royal Academician may not be amiss here, and will certainly tend to the better understanding of the story. Alexander McLish, a typical Highlander, and one-time private in a Scots' regiment, at the date of the birth of his son Daniel (the artist), kept a small tanner's and shoemaker's shop in Cork. Although in comparatively humble circumstances, the McLish family were decidedly outside the ordinary. The mother of the painter seems to have been a woman of strong individuality and force of character. A real help-meet to her husband, she acted for twenty-two years as pew-opener, or sideswoman, at the Presbyterian Church, Princes Street, Cork. I have failed to discover when Maclise first altered the spelling of his surname. I rather fancy—though I am not quite sure—that he did so on, or soon after, his arrival in London from Ireland.

He had good warrant for making the change, for the paternal family name had a barbarous, savage ring about it, quite incompatible with the polite society into which he was about to enter.

The McLish family consisted of two girls and three boys, of whom Daniel was either the second or the third, I am not quite sure which.

Heredity counts for something, even in moral matters, although of course there are exceptions.

It was so in the case of the children of Alexander McLish and his wife. Both the girls and their brothers—Daniel especially—were remarkably handsome, all of them taking after their stalwart, personable father.

There is no evidence extant as to the fact—at least I know of none—but there must have been pronounced mental activity in both the parents, or else, whence came the genius of two of the boys? That of Daniel is well known; but that one of his brothers attained high eminence as a surgeon, is a fact respecting which few people are aware. Then again, his sisters were undoubtedly clever women, the one who kept house for him—he was a life-long bachelor—adding many accomplishments to her undeniable natural gifts. One thing our artist did not inherit from his parents, viz. good health. He was always delicate, which may, and probably was the reason why he never married. He was not naturally industrious, working often by fits and starts, or when "the mood was on him." The true cause of this might, perhaps, have been chronic invalidism; possibly it was. But howsoever it might have been, it is perfectly clear, that in spite of what he himself called his laziness, he contrived to do much good work in the course of his comparatively short life of fifty-nine years.

Of course there are differences of opinion as to his real position as an artist. To-day he is judged more particularly by his two fine frescoes in the Painted Gallery of the House of Lords, "The Death of Nelson at Trafalgar," and "The Meeting of Wellington and

Blucher at Waterloo." His "Play Scene in Hamlet" also enjoyed a certain measure of popularity at the time, but, save with the artistic few, is now virtually forgotten. To my thinking—I speak but for myself—his "Caxton" picture painted for his friend Forster to the latter's order, is his greatest work: the figures of the old printer, King Edward the Fourth, and the two young princes being especially good. But even this painting, good though it be, suffers from the inability of Maclise to get the *depth*, which is the living essence of a picture. His figures and setting were invariably *flat;* everything seemed to be on the one plane. Still, he was an artist to be reckoned with, at a time when art was at a very low ebb, and will always command a certain amount of admiration from those who can appreciate sound, honest, straightforward work. Besides the "Caxton" picture, Maclise painted more than one other canvas for his friend. One is a scene from Ben Jonson's *Every Man in His Humour*, played as one of the amateur dramatic performances, in which Forster is represented as Kitely. Another is Macready as "Werner," which has been engraved, and the third, the "Nymph at the Waterfall," painted in 1842, and bought from the artist by Charles Dickens. At the sale of Dickens's effects at Christie's, Forster obtained it at the price of £640. Miss Georgina Hogarth, Dickens's sister-in-law, and one of his executors, stood as the model for the "Nymph" in the picture. Maclise also made a large number of original sketches for his Portrait Gallery, which are now in the Forster Collection at South Kensington.

They include nearly, if not all, the members of the

very wide Dickens and Forster circle, one or two of them, notably the poet Rogers, Leigh Hunt and, I think, Forster himself, being especially good, and characteristic of the originals.

From April, 1840, Maclise went here, there and everywhere with the two other members of the second Triumvirate. In jovial company, from Richmond to Birmingham, and thence to Shakespeare's Stratford, and Johnson's Lichfield, they made time and opportunity their slaves of the Lamp and Ring, even when, coming to the end of their resources, providence stepped in, in the person of Dickens's younger brother Alfred, and saved the situation. This was only one of many such expeditions, though, fortunately, not with a like ending. But the most notable of all their junketings was the trip to Cornwall in 1842, Clarkson Stanfield's addition to the Triumvirate making it, for the purpose of this Cornish outing, a quartette.

It lasted over three weeks, into which space of time was pressed everything enjoyable that could possibly be thought of. Dickens said afterwards: "Seriously, I do believe there never was such a trip, while as for Mac and Stanfield, they made such sketches, those two men, in the most romantic of our halting-places, that you would have sworn we had the Spirit of Beauty with us, as well as the Spirit of Fun."

There was something of both in Stanfield's drawing of the Logan Stone incident, in which Forster is seen, perched in uneasy majesty upon the apex of the famous boulder. It humorously expresses the keen enjoyment of every member of the expedition, getting in a specially

good-natured jest at the expense of Forster, who, however, in this particular feat, as subsequently on the trip, when he mounted the coping-stone of the highest battlement of the castle of St. Michael's, to look calmly down upon the shimmering sea, three thousand feet below, proved his prowess as an athlete of no mean order.

Years afterwards, when sterner interests prevailed with all of them, Maclise pleasantly reminded Forster of his athletic achievements on that memorable occasion. "Don't I still see the Logan Stone," he laughed, "and you enthroned on the giddy top, while we, rocking it on its pivot, shrank from all that lay concealed below!" Happy days these for all concerned, and for no one more than for Maclise.

Chronic ill-health had not yet claimed him for its own, so that he was quite free to throw himself with true boyish enthusiasm and ardour into everything that was proposed for the common enjoyment. King Arthur and Tintagel were in the programme, and received their due share of appreciation. It was on this journey that Forster introduced Maclise to the celebrated Waterfall of St. Wignton, which the artist made yet more famous by his picture, now, with the Logan Stone drawing, at South Kensington, of the "Nymph at the Waterfall."

Although not a member of the happy company, Thackeray contributed his quota to the general celebration of the event, in the shape of a pen-and-ink pleasantry, depicting Dickens, Maclise, Stanfield and Forster sitting in a carriage, drawn by a fearful and wonderful pair of old horses. As likenesses—the men,

not the animals—they are, of course, not to be taken seriously. Nearly every yard of the tour was made by road. Railways were then in their infancy, so that they were practically of little use to the travellers. It is this which really gives point to Thackeray's sketch.

One can imagine the *tight squeeze* in the carriage; the jolting over bad roads, and the different moods and humours, equine as well as human, after each successive *change* of horses and postboys. So far as Dickens was concerned, this Cornish trip was made with an object. He was about to begin *Martin Chuzzlewit*, and was strongly desirous to open it with a Cornish setting, instead of the Wiltshire village of the published story. It is doubtful if we have lost anything by the substitution.

About this time, Maclise made several sketches of Dickens and his wife. One, with the addition of the latter's sister-in-law, Miss Georgina Hogarth, was made shortly after the Richmond holiday. Just a mere outline in pencil of the three, but how good, that of Dickens himself, in many respects, that is. It has, however, one notable fault, it flatters somewhat. But Maclise nearly always flattered in his likenesses. Had he lived in the seventeenth century, and painted Protector Oliver, he would most certainly have left out the famous wart, not counting the risk, however great it might have been.

Never painter had such golden opportunities for "catching a likeness," as had Maclise in the case of Dickens. He saw him in all his moods, in his genial, merry moments, as when contemplation claimed him for its own, or when sorrow touched him. But it will



DANIEL MACLISE, R.A.

From an engraving by J. Smith of the painting by E. M. Ward, A.R.A.

be noticed, I think, that in all the Maclise portraits, there is no indication either of geniality or sorrow, neither is a contemplative expression very much in evidence. In every instance it is Dickens in repose, and that is all one can say about it. The best of the Maclise portraits is the 1839 painting, when the novelist was twenty-seven, and running, with swift, but sure steps up the ladder of fame. Self-confidence, in its best sense, shows itself in the poise of the handsome head, in the just-sufficiently-parted lips, and in the wonderfully-expressed bright intellectuality of the eyes. Of all the artist's efforts in this direction, this shows the least sign of "flattering," yet giving us Dickens as he really was at that age and period of his career. After the first few years of the second Triumvirate, and when the widening of both the Dickens and Forster social circle practically rendered the continuance, on the old lines, of the old-time expeditions and convivialities impossible, the friendship of Forster and Maclise mainly confined itself, of necessity, and in the case of both of them, to a more or less voluminous correspondence. Of course, Maclise's continued, and ever-increasing ill-health, together with a growing disinclination to move very much, or very far abroad, largely contributed to this state of things. He was always ailing, and sending notes to Forster to excuse himself for not keeping this or that engagement. But he was never peevish or complaining, always endeavouring cheerily to make the best of everything. I would have crowned him a very king of optimists.

Occasionally, when apparently in more than ordinarily

lonely mood, he writes: "You will not be longer than a fortnight, I hope, in Scotland." Or again, a specially and pathetically affectionate note: "I hope we shall see more of each other when you return. I remain, my dear, your faithful friend, D. Maclise."

Both the above were written in 1847.

In an earlier letter from him there is a reference to "the Tourney," which is particularly interesting. There can be no doubt that Maclise is alluding to the famous Eglinton Tournament, held by the then Earl of Eglinton in honour of the Accession and Coronation of Queen Victoria. Whether Forster or Dickens were present at this ruinously-costly spectacle, I am unable to say—I do not think they were. Certainly Maclise was not. All that I do know is, that wet weather brought the whole affair to grief, and to a lame conclusion; and that Prince Louis Napoleon subsequently, after experiencing many adventures, and much ill-fortune, Napoleon the Third, Emperor of the French, "broke a lance" in the lists. Maclise was fond of the theatre, and many of his notes to Forster are requests for "a box," though latterly, I expect, these claims upon Forster's friendship and editorial privileges were made, not for his own benefit and amusement, but to pleasure his housekeeper-sister, and to vary and brighten the dreariness of a somewhat monotonous existence. Her devotion to her brother David, undoubtedly deserved, as it has undoubtedly received, fraternal recognition and appreciation.

What a difference there is between the (very) Free List of other days, and the commercial grabbery in matters theatrical, as at present prevailing.

Granted that the first was carried to an absurdly improvident excess, still, how delightful it all was. My own memories of Charles Kean, Charles Mathews, Little Robson, Ben Webster, Fechter, Sothern, Buckstone, Toole, Paul Bedford, and an innumerable company of the like immortals, were all made possible by "paper." One need not be ashamed to own it, for I think I may say, that, without exception, every one of Forster's friends with whom this book is more or less concerned—from Charles Lamb to Charles Dickens—availed themselves to the full of the "Free List" privilege, and seldom, if ever, paid to witness a theatrical performance. Beyond question, the old system (deplorably unsystematic, I admit), made for a delightful re-union, before and behind the footlights, of "all the talents," the new, alas! makes for nothing, except—save in very rare instances—to discourtesy, semitic greed, and the blackest of artistic darkness. It is, of course, the abuse of the old privilege that has killed it.

The ill-regulated, mendacious impudence—shall I call it ?—of the many has, as it ever does, operated to the detriment of the deserving, or rather rightly-entitled few. As I have said, there are exceptions among managers—notable exceptions with whom, given a full and sufficient reason, the old courtesy, within reasonable limits, is still the rule. To mention names would be both invidious, and, I fear, unwisely unkind to the managers in question. There are wolves abroad. No more need be said! Maclise had, too, a partiality for seeing the running of a good race. Whenever he could, he visited Epsom on Derby Day. On June 1st, 1854, he writes—

"I was at the Derby yesterday, and my face is burnt thro' and thro'. Oh, Ciel! the crowd! and glitter! and equipage! and villainy! and Pigeon Pie!" A couple of years before this, to be exact, January 14th, 1852, he is concerned about the duties of hospitality, and writes to Forster seeking his advice, while relating, in humorous fashion, his own experience at a recent "small and early." "I must," he says, "take to giving parties. I see so many people set up to do this, with such small resources, but with immense complacency, that I do not see why I should allow my modesty as entertainer to stand in the way. The other night I assisted at a *small* and *early* party. There I was in a white neckcloth, engaged in talking the nicest platitudes on art to three old ladies with false hair, and flowers in their caps. Cups of tea, of course, went round, and there were a few daguerreotypes on the table. How I sighed, and died to be off, and at last stole away, and breathed again." It was eminently characteristic of him, that he always put his experience to good and practical use so that, although we hear no more about his proposed hospitable "launchings-out," there is no doubt, that, acting upon experience, he, at least, knew what to avoid in the arranging of any social functions he might have in contemplation.

So much has been said by Forster himself in the *Life* about the dramatic performances in aid of the comparatively short-lived Guild of Literature and Art, that to do more than touch upon it here would be superfluous. Of course its real founder was Dickens himself, seconded, though I fancy with not quite so much enthusiasm, by Bulwer Lytton, Forster, Mr. (afterwards

Sir) John Tenniel, E. M. Ward, R.A., Clarkson Stanfield, and many others in the world of Literature and Art.[1] Of all that large company of distinguished men Sir John Tenniel is the only one who survives to-day. The greatest of all the great *Punch* cartoonists is still with us; though, I regret to say, blind, or nearly so, at the age of over ninety years. What a wonderful link with those early days of the nineteenth century! Sir Francis C. Burnand has been good enough to furnish me with some interesting original matter with regard to Sir John, for which I here publicly tender him my best and sincere thanks.

"I have known Sir John Tenniel," says Sir Francis, in the course of a long communication to me, "for very nearly fifty years. We first met at the *Punch* Table in Bouverie Street, where I was presented to Tenniel as the young man who had just been admitted to the Select Brotherhood by Mark Lemon, under whose admirable editorship William Makepeace Thackeray still retained his place as a non-writing contributor. My *first* year 'on *Punch*' was Thackeray's last; it was also the last but one of John Leech. Leech and Tenniel were excellent equestrians, the mounted guard of the *Punch* staff. Both occasionally hunted, and I am sure that Sir John could still give us amusing accounts of runs with 'the old Berkeley,' when the two famous *Punch* artists greatly distinguished themselves. Being the fortunate possessor of a clever cob, it was my good luck to be frequently John Tenniel's riding companion.

[1] A comedy, "Not so Bad as we Seem," was played at Devonshire House, before Queen Victoria, in which Tenniel took part.

Later, Linley Sambourne joined us, and 'we three' had many a pleasant jaunt together. The first occasion of the trio making a day and a night of it was one summer time, when we boldly determined to send on our *valises* to the old Elizabethan inn at Chingford, where we had arranged to pass the night, previous to starting early and 'doing' Epping Forest the next day. The hotel was (and is still, I believe) delightfully situated on the London border of the Forest.

"It has been recently rebuilt, or restored, in true old English style. With Sambourne I called—both of us mounted—on Tenniel, who awaited us at the gate of his house in Portsdown Road, Bayswater, to which his mare had just been brought round from the adjoining stable.

"'Lovely day for taking the road,' said Tenniel, as he examined the girths, 'and Miss Brown will be delighted.'

"I was rather taken aback. 'I thought we had arranged to be a quiet bachelor trio. No ladies admitted.'

"'Of course not,' replies Tenniel, with some surprise.

"'But,' I ventured to remind him, 'you spoke about Miss Brown being delighted.'

"Sambourne chuckled, and Tenniel laughed, as indicating his mare he answered—

"'My dear chap! we can't go without *her*. Here she is!—let me introduce you to *my* "Miss Brown."'

"And what a pleasant time we had of it!

"In private life I have occasionally heard John Tenniel make an informal, graceful after-dinner speech, absolutely impromptu, as far as I could judge, and,

therefore, on the memorable occasion of the banquet given to him on his retiring, I had expected a most interesting speech from him, in reply to the toast of the evening, as proposed by Mr. Arthur Balfour. But so great was his emotion, that he was utterly overwhelmed, and, having risen to acknowledge the toast, which had been wonderfully acclaimed, Sir John could only utter the words, 'My Lords and gentlemen,' when, utterly overcome, words failed him, and he was compelled to resume his seat, speechless. The effect was marvellous.

"The eloquence of silence was, after a brief pause, electrical, and the speechless speaker was acclaimed even more heartily, were that possible, than he had been when he first stood up to speak. It was a touching and memorable scene, which none of those present were ever likely to forget.

"On rare, and uncommonly convivial occasions, when, according to ancient precedent, all *convives* were expected to contribute a song, speech, toast, or 'sentiment,' Tenniel had in reserve a song, entitled, 'The Sailor's Adieu to the Ladies of Spain,' which he gave admirably.

"It was Dibdinesque—but I cannot find it in Dibdin's ballads—and I fancy that it had been popular in some nautical drama, and sung by the popular representative of the British Tar on the Stage, Mr. T. P. Cooke, known familiarly as 'Tippy Cooke.'

"The ballad, as Sir John sung it, and as he so far still remembers it, commenced—

> "Now farewell to you, all fine Spanish ladies,
> Farewell and adieu to you, ladies of Spain;
> For we've received orders to sail for old England,
> But hope in a short time to come back again."

"I fancy, too, this must have been the chorus; at all events I am pretty sure that in those days, when lungs were in good order, and voices were fresh and strong, we made it out a jovial chorus, and sang it with great effect, and still greater personal satisfaction."

All this is doubly interesting, in view of the fact that Tenniel played in Bulwer's specially written play, performed at Devonshire House in 1850, before Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, and lives to-day, at the age of ninety-three, able to talk over times, as he has done with his old friend Sir Francis Burnand.

May the honoured and venerable cartoonist live to be congratulated upon attaining his centenary.

I do not find that Maclise took any active share in the dramatic enterprise, whatever he might have done in the committee-work of the Guild.

What was the actual cause of the breach (if the falling-off in the friendship may be dignified by such a term) between Dickens and Maclise, and which lasted apparently to the death of the latter, April the 25th, 1870, I am unable to say, or with whom was the initiative. Certain it is, however, that on the evening of the artist's burial at Kensal Green, Dickens, at the Academy dinner, which fell on the same date, paid an eloquent tribute to his old friend, the dead painter, though they had long ceased their cordial intercourse. I think Dickens sincerely mourned his old companion; but his own worries and anxieties, much greater, it is now known, from some of his later letters to Forster, than appeared on the surface, would prevent him from giving full vent to his sorrow. This tribute of his to his one-time close friend proved

to be his own last public utterance. In less than two months afterwards, he himself passed away. But life is full of such curious coincidences, the wonder being, not in the mere happening of them, but in the superstitious spirit with which so many people regard them. It was not so much the chronic ill-health of Maclise that caused his death: it was the financial squabbles with the Government of the day, over the price for his House of Lords frescoes. He was treated in most niggardly fashion, and with an absolute want of consideration by the Department responsible for the decoration of the New (as they then were) Houses of Parliament. I remember going with my father and a friend to see one of the frescoes (I forget which) in the painting. It was the only time I ever exchanged words with the famous R.A., and can just recollect his descending from his elevated scaffolding to speak to us. He was really only a middle-aged man in years, but the streaks of whitish-grey in his hair, and the worn appearance of his features, made him to look an old, old man. The words he spoke to me were but few. "Well, young shaver! take my advice: buy a broom and go crossing-sweeping, but leave picture-painting to foolish people like me." I could only mutter "Yes, sir," and there the conversation ended so far as I was concerned. Hallam, Lord Tennyson, in his *Life* of his father, quotes an undated letter from Saville Morton, for some years Paris correspondent of the *Daily News*, who, writing to Mary Brotherton, a popular authoress of that day, says: "Thackeray gave a dinner" (at the Cock Tavern, presumably) "at which were present Tennyson, Forster" (then literary critic

of the *Examiner*), "Emerson Tennent, M.P., Crowe, and Maclise. . . . The largeness of Alfred's proportions, both physical and poetical, were universally the theme of admiration. Maclise admired him excessively, and fell quite in love with him." Maclise loved everybody worth loving. That his affection for Forster was deep and sincere, no one reading his letters (especially the later ones) could doubt for a moment. And Forster, as sincerely, returned his regard. With the death of Maclise the second Triumvirate virtually came to an end, although for many years, as we have seen, it was to all intents and purposes a dead letter. But the spirit of it, it is pleasant to think, remained until the two other members of it joined their old comrade in the mystery-land of many shadows.

Chapter V : *Concerning a Great Friendship*

WHAT really can be said by me, or, indeed, by any one, about the great friendship of Forster and Dickens, that can possibly be new, or of any value, after John Forster's exhaustive biography of his dead friend ?

Practically nothing; while even to suggest such a thing would appear to savour not a little of presumption, as unwarrantable, as it would be, in great measure, of very small profit, in a literary sense. But, inasmuch as to the possible readers of this book, a record of Forster and his friendships, with little or no mention made of the greatest and closest of them all, would be perilously near to being like Shakespeare's play of *Hamlet*, with the Prince of Denmark cut out, a difficulty is at once created, which at first seemed to me to be insuperable and almost impossible to bridge over, in a way satisfactory both to my readers and to myself. It then occurred to me, that, although I might, possibly should be guilty, here and there, of repeating something already dealt with by Forster, Mr. Mitton, or Mr. Percy Fitzgerald, I could at least draw to a limited extent on personal memories, and, from the mass of Dickens correspondence (much of it still unpublished), dig out,

perhaps, much interesting matter relating to the two friends.

I have already said, in writing about Maclise, that, for the reasons just stated, I proposed to refer to Dickens, more particularly in his relation to the other personalities mentioned in these pages, in such a way that whatever little I may have to say in this chapter with regard to his friend Forster, will be irrespective of any other allusion I may of necessity have to make to him, when discussing other people and events with whom and which he was, in the natural course of things, mixed up in some way or other.

There is a precious relic of Dickens in the Forster Bequest, at South Kensington, viz. his Diary, as kept by him from 1838 to 1841, inclusive. For obvious reasons, access to these four volumes is most jealously guarded by the Museum authorities. By kind permission of Miss Georgina Hogarth, co-executor with John Forster of Dickens, I was enabled to see, handle, and make certain extracts from them for reproduction in this book. The mere handling of them was, in itself, a great privilege, and one highly valued by me. The Diary is not at all well kept; in fact it can hardly be said to have been kept at all. It opens with a long, sorrowful entry on the death of Mary Hogarth, his sister-in-law, whom he dearly loved.

The sad circumstance attending the opening of the record, seems to have created in him a distaste for continuing its proper upkeep. Besides, there was too much of the mechanical about it to please Dickens; the sustained regular effort was against the grain with

302nd day. Monday, OCTOBER 29, 1838. Hare Hunting begins.

	£	s	d
Hatfield Expences on Saturday —	1	12	0
Fare to Leamington 17/- each —	1	14	0
Coach to Stage-coach office	—	2	6
Coachmen, guard, and porter	—	14	—
Lunches	—	6	—

Started from Coach office near Hungerford Street with Brown — agreeable ride, but cold — Leamington, Copps's Hotel — Excellent Inn.

303rd day. Tuesday, OCTOBER 30, 1838.

DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE & ART FORSTER BEQUEST 1946

	£	s	d		
Bill at Leamington	—	2	19	0	
Boots of Kenilworth Castle, and visit	—	—	6	—	
Expences at Warwick Castle	—	—	6	6	
Turnpikes	—	—	—	1	6
Horses and post boy	—	1	13	0	

away to Kenilworth — delightful — beautiful beyond expression — Mem: what a Summer resort! — three months — lie about the ruins — books — Hunting — Scenery from this ora. for next year

FACSIMILE OF ENTRIES IN DICKENS'S DIARY

him, and so we have but a mere fragment, where, under other conditions, we might have had a wonderfully illuminating document of inestimable value. My reasons for the selection of the entries here reproduced, were twofold. In the first place, they form a curious and interesting contrast with the travelling systems of the present day.

Post-chaises and post-boys ! the very mention of them calls up visions of Mr. Pickwick and his satellites. Jingle and the Maiden Aunt, Carker and Mrs. Dombey, and a host of other immortal Dickens creations who, in the most romantic circumstances, have made use of this old-world means of locomotion. Secondly, to see these old entries of posting and hotel expenses, in Dickens's own handwriting, in reproduction only, is a revelation; but to have handled the books, and to have looked upon the actual entry, is, I can assure the reader, something as difficult to describe, as it will be impossible to forget. Prices were undoubtedly high in those " good old days " : on that score, at least, we now have something to be thankful for, for the luxuries of the Ritz, and of a £2000 motor-car, are for the favoured few only, and not (perhaps, for many reasons, it is as well) for the ordinary work-a-day person, and certainly —I speak feelingly—for the average man of letters.

On one, at any rate, of these trips—that to Stratford and Leamington—Forster accompanied Dickens; with regard to the other excursion I am not so sure. I somehow imagine that this visit to Shakespeare's birthplace first put into the head of Forster the idea of acquiring that wonderfully interesting Elizabethan

relic for the nation. The glamour of such a notion would naturally possess his soul to such a degree, that he would have no peace until his desire became an accomplished fact, as, indeed, it afterwards did so become. The story of Forster's own personal efforts towards this end, is worth telling. More especially as but few people in these days know anything at all of his part in the movement to purchase the place.[1] Dickens had an almost overmastering passion for the old dramatists, and all matters appertaining to early theatrical history, and took an active part in bringing the affair to a satisfactory conclusion. I remember, too, as a boy, hearing it said that Dickens took a keen interest in the whole thing, and no doubt—though there is no actual proof extant—contributed to the Fund.

His passion for the stage, and all that concerned it, would, I think, impel him in any case to give the movement material as well as moral support. Witness how he persuaded Harris to engage Fechter for the old "Princess's," now being demolished to make way for the latest thing in monster hotels. The French actor's introduction to London was at the outset a pure experiment. Beginning with *Ruy Blas*, it was soon decided that he should play Shakespeare—*Hamlet* being selected for the initial venture in this direction. This I believe, too, was at Dickens's suggestion.

To the surprise of everybody, the critics as well as the playgoing public, a great success was scored.

[1] The whole matter is fully gone into in the Chapter on "Forster and Stratford-on-Avon."

Fechter played the Royal Dane in a blonde wig, a revolutionary innovation, which was, however, warranted by a general concensus of opinion, alike critical and popular in favour of it. This was in 1864, the tragedy running for sixty nights to enthusiastically appreciative audiences. Quite a respectable record for those days, when Chatterton of Drury Lane declared, that Shakespeare spelt ruin. As Othello, Fechter was a failure—popularly, at least—but there were many who thought otherwise, and greatly admired his conception of the character of the Moor. As a youngster, I saw him both at the Princess's, and when he went into management at the Lyceum.

Little Robson was then astonishing the town at the Olympic. Everybody went to see Robson in Medea; the Yellow Dwarf; Boots at the Swan; the Wandering Minstrel (Jim Baggs); the Porters' Knot, and the Chimney Corner. It is the fashion in these days to greet mention of Robson's name with—"Robson? Never heard of him!" or with a superior shrug and lifting of the eyebrows.

But for all that, Frederick Robson was a genius, and this present generation has missed much in being born too late to see that fact for themselves.

Though Fechter cannot be said, in any sense, to have been a friend of Forster's, the latter must often have met the distinguished French actor at Gadshill Place, where Fechter was a frequent and familiar figure in the friendly circle assembled there. Dickens was his adviser-in-chief both at the Princess's and at the Lyceum—in such matters as the revision of plays.

relic for the nation. The glamour of such a notion would naturally possess his soul to such a degree, that he would have no peace until his desire became an accomplished fact, as, indeed, it afterwards did so become. The story of Forster's own personal efforts towards this end, is worth telling. More especially as but few people in these days know anything at all of his part in the movement to purchase the place.[1] Dickens had an almost overmastering passion for the old dramatists, and all matters appertaining to early theatrical history, and took an active part in bringing the affair to a satisfactory conclusion. I remember, too, as a boy, hearing it said that Dickens took a keen interest in the whole thing, and no doubt—though there is no actual proof extant—contributed to the Fund.

His passion for the stage, and all that concerned it, would, I think, impel him in any case to give the movement material as well as moral support. Witness how he persuaded Harris to engage Fechter for the old "Princess's," now being demolished to make way for the latest thing in monster hotels. The French actor's introduction to London was at the outset a pure experiment. Beginning with *Ruy Blas*, it was soon decided that he should play Shakespeare—*Hamlet* being selected for the initial venture in this direction. This I believe, too, was at Dickens's suggestion.

To the surprise of everybody, the critics as well as the playgoing public, a great success was scored.

[1] The whole matter is fully gone into in the Chapter on "Forster and Stratford-on-Avon."

Fechter played the Royal Dane in a blonde wig, a revolutionary innovation, which was, however, warranted by a general concensus of opinion, alike critical and popular in favour of it. This was in 1864, the tragedy running for sixty nights to enthusiastically appreciative audiences. Quite a respectable record for those days, when Chatterton of Drury Lane declared, that Shakespeare spelt ruin. As Othello, Fechter was a failure—popularly, at least—but there were many who thought otherwise, and greatly admired his conception of the character of the Moor. As a youngster, I saw him both at the Princess's, and when he went into management at the Lyceum.

Little Robson was then astonishing the town at the Olympic. Everybody went to see Robson in Medea; the Yellow Dwarf; Boots at the Swan; the Wandering Minstrel (Jim Baggs); the Porters' Knot, and the Chimney Corner. It is the fashion in these days to greet mention of Robson's name with—"Robson? Never heard of him!" or with a superior shrug and lifting of the eyebrows.

But for all that, Frederick Robson was a genius, and this present generation has missed much in being born too late to see that fact for themselves.

Though Fechter cannot be said, in any sense, to have been a friend of Forster's, the latter must often have met the distinguished French actor at Gadshill Place, where Fechter was a frequent and familiar figure in the friendly circle assembled there. Dickens was his adviser-in-chief both at the Princess's and at the Lyceum—in such matters as the revision of plays.

Fechter was French, and by consequence Gallic in many of his ideas and methods.

Forster quotes from a letter of Dickens, where the novelist humorously relates how he had cautioned the actor about a certain new play.

"I have struck out some enormities," he says, but admits that the first act was one of the best he had ever seen. It seems to me somewhat strange, that Forster, rich as he was in the possession of dramatic instinct, should have written in the *Life:* "Theatres and their affairs (which, as I conceive, include the great players), are but things of a season, and even Dickens's whim and humour will not revive for us any interest in them." Is there lack of intelligent interest in Garrick, Edmund Kean, Macready, Buckstone, Irving, and the rest of the great company of the immortals?

For once, I think, Forster was wrong. He was too absorbed at this time in his purely literary labours to regard with anything but indifference the best things in the dramatic world then passing across the stage. Perhaps I may be forgiven if I add to this mentioning of Fechter, the finest romantic actor, not only of his day, but of all days, past and present, the telling of a little story. For some years I lived in the United States, in the later "'sixties," my temporary home being in Philadelphia, the City of Brotherly Love. In the country outside the city, bordering on the banks of the Delaware River, there is an extensive colony—mostly engaged in agriculture—of acclimatised Hollanders—the original settlers—known as "Pennsylvania Dutchmen." Although very exclusive, here and there

amongst them will be found an English or American farmer, the two races, however, English and Dutch, never mixing quite satisfactorily. One day I was standing on the corner of Arch and Eighth Streets, talking to a friend. It was a very hot day, I remember, in mid-summer.

Presently, I noticed, coming slowly up Eighth Street, a shabby-looking buggy, or box wagon, driven by an inordinately stout man, in a long, loose, brown coat, as shabby-looking as his vehicle, with upon his massive head an enormous panama straw hat. To complete his description, he had a big dark beard, plentifully streaked with grey, that descended nearly to his waist. Arrived at the corner, he pulled up to the side-walk, got slowly down, with his whip in his hand, and stood for a moment, gazing about him, as if he were looking for somebody. Then his eyes caught those of my friend. Suddenly drawing himself up to his full height —I had seen that he stooped—he raised two fingers in military fashion to the brim of his hat, smiled, as I thought half sadly, but very sweetly, his shoulders took on again their former bowed appearance, and he passed on, as one weary beyond measure, up Arch Street, his whip under his arm, leaving his wagon and old grey horse to take care of themselves. "Do you know who that is?" queried my friend, before I could put the question myself. "No!" I answered. "I haven't the slightest notion, although there is something about him, that, in a hazy sort of a way, seems familiar to me." "Well, it ought to be *mighty* familiar," was the reply. "You've seen him times enough, I know.

Man! that's Charles Fechter, the one-time famous actor! the greatest Hamlet of this or any other country."

I was thunderstruck. This quaint-looking, shabbily-dressed, big-bearded old Pennsylvania farmer, Charles Fechter, the brilliant creator of Ruy Blas, the ideal Hamlet, the friend of Dickens! and yet with about him that indescribable something which, his identity once established, made it appear that I ought, as my friend had said, to have recognised him.

"Yes, he has a small farm a few miles out of Philadelphia, among the Pennsylvania Dutchmen, with whom, for a wonder, he gets on remarkably well. I don't like the look of him to-day though. He lives all alone, except for the company of a hired help or two." "It is inexplicable," I said. "It is; but it's true, nevertheless." Three months afterwards, I heard that he was dead.

I was glad to have seen him, and yet, in a sense, sorry; for the illusion of years was destroyed in a moment, and Charles Fechter, as I saw him last, old, bent, and grey, will be the picture of him that will, even against my will, linger longest in my memory.

Dickens's elder sons were now growing apace, and, more than once as a boy have I, with some cousins, made expeditions arranged by Mrs. Forster, to various day theatrical performances. These day shows were rarer then than they are now. The word "matinée," too, was unknown, "afternoon performance" being the current term for the function.

One such visit, I remember, was to the old Polygraphic

Hall (afterwards Toole's Theatre), in King William Street, Strand, to see the conjurer to H.I.M. The Emperor of Russia, Professor Wilbaja Frikel. It was all, of course, very primitive; childish even; but that we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves, I am perfectly sure.

And now, the two elder boys, Charles Junior, and Sydney who subsequently joined the Royal Navy as a cadet, have long since gone over to the majority; Sydney, then a lieutenant, being drowned in the Red Sea. Charles Junior's son, Charles the Third, I often have the pleasure of meeting.

Towards the end of the novelist's life he enjoyed but indifferent health. The fact that his literary work was no longer easy to him, that he often, indeed, had to make an effort to arrange his thoughts and attend to the business connected with *All the Year Round* and his Readings, all this contributed more and more to "keep him behind the curtain," as it were. This was about the time that Forster received from him a certain disquieting letter.

"57 Glo'cester Place,
"Hyde Park Gardens, W.,
"*Tuesday, 29th March,* 1864.

"My Dear Forster,

.

"*I must give up.* I have wavered and considered, and considered and wavered, but if I take that sort of holiday, I must have a day or two to spare after it, and at this critical time I have not. If I were to lose a page of the 5 Nos. I have proposed to myself to be ready by the publication day, I should feel that I

had fallen short. *I have grown hard to satisfy, and write very slowly,* and I have so much not put in that will be thought of when I don't want to think of it, that *I am forced to take more care than I once took.*

"Yours affectionately,
"CHARLES DICKENS."

It was almost precisely the same with Forster. The two friends did not see each other nearly so often as in the happy, irresponsible days, when the Bohemian spirit hovered over everything they said and did.

As Thackeray once said of himself, Dickens and Forster, "We are become respectable." Respectability as interpreted by Thackeray, often leads to a state of social monasticism, curiously akin to oblivion.

How many people now alive can recollect the last Dickens reading in London—March the 7th, 1870, I think it was—at St. James's Hall? Very few, I am thinking. Perhaps a brief description of it, as I remember it, may prove of interest to those who, however, can never be made precisely to understand what a "reading" by Charles Dickens really meant. Just returned to London from a year's health cruise in Chinese waters, I found myself, with a dear old aunt of mine, well known to Dickens, in the second row of the stalls at St. James's Hall. Every inch of seating-space was occupied, and, it was said, could have been occupied twice over and more.

Long ago as it was, I can distinctly call to mind the look of keen anticipation on almost every face.

It was not publicly known that this was to be the last of those delightful experiences, yet, somehow, there seemed to brood over everybody and everything a barely perceptible shadow of impending evil.

Forster, who, with other close friends and relatives, was present, records, that, " probably in all his life he (Dickens) never read so well."

He had selected the *Christmas Carol*, and the " Trial " from *Pickwick*, for that which soon he was to announce as his final leave-taking of his faithful public. I cannot do better, I think, than quote Forster himself on this point. " The old delicacy was again delightfully manifest, and a subdued tone, as well in the humorous, as in the serious portion, gave something to all the reading as of a quiet sadness of farewell. The charm of this was at its height when he shut the volume of *Pickwick*, and spoke in his own person.

He said, that for fifteen years he had been reading his own books to audiences whose sensitive and kindly recognition of them had given him instruction and enjoyment in his art such as few men could have had; but that he nevertheless thought it well now to retire upon older associations, and in future to devote himself exclusively to the calling which had first made him known.

" In but two short weeks," he concluded, " from this time, I hope that you may enter, in your own homes, on a new series of readings at which my assistance will be indispensable; but from these garish lights I vanish now for ever more, with a heartfelt, grateful, respectful, affectionate farewell." There was a strange, tense,

hushful silence as he left the platform, followed, with startling suddenness, by a veritable storm of voice-power from every corner of the big hall. For a moment it brought him back; but in a second he was gone again, this time to return no more. I shall never forget the scene; it was impressive to solemnity. We seemed to be assisting at some awe-inspiring religious rite, and when the end came, something appeared to have gone out of our lives. We should hear that wonderful voice, see that small, Garrick-like figure no more in that place for ever. As faithful friend and adviser, Forster had more than once attempted to dissuade him from continuing his public readings, was, indeed, from the very outset, opposed to the scheme; but Dickens was bent upon fulfilling what he conceived to be his duty towards his family, the Messrs. Chappel, and his public. "I must go on," he had said to Forster, only a short while before this last reading in March, "I *must* go on," but nature exercised her inexorable veto; Dr. Beard, his friend and medical attendant, who was close by watching him all through his later readings, seconded nature, and, in collaboration with Sir Henry Thompson and Sir Thomas Watson, ordered, in his own interests, that the readings after that of March the 7th should be stopped.

There is nothing to add to Forster's graphic account of all that happened afterwards. Neither would I wish to add anything. That which is already well told, is almost sure to be spoilt in the re-telling.

The two most beautiful things in the life of Charles

Dickens, were, first, his intense love for, and enjoyment of, everything connected with his home; and, secondly, his affectionate regard for John Forster. The two things, his work and his home, Forster says he kept perfectly distinct, the one from the other; but both, in their several ways, completely absorbed his whole nature for the time being. It was, in a sense, a dual existence, differing, indeed, from the ordinary examples in such cases, in that they were altogether true, innocent and right. The *man*, Charles Dickens, is certainly to be traced all through such books as *The Old Curiosity Shop*, *Little Dorrit*, or *A Christmas Carol;* but Charles Dickens, the creator of those books, the literary worker, the thinker of great thoughts, never entered behind the domestic veil: like the Mohammedan, he put off his shoes before stepping over the threshold of his home affections and enjoyment. Although Forster has hinted at something like this with regard to his friend's curiously constituted mind, this picture of Dickens as, in effect, living two lives will come as a surpise to many lovers of his books and personality to-day. As his friend and biographer says, he seldom or ever talked "shop." Although a well-read man, and full to the brim of that general information which is as the bone and sinew of the man who writes to teach his fellow man, Dickens never aired his knowledge either of books or things. With a just and proper pride in his great popularity, he was utterly devoid of "side." He was a stranger to self-conceit, and an excessive use of the personal pronoun was not to be laid to his charge. By

some he has been called a Socialist, but a Socialist in the sense in which the term is used nowadays, he most assuredly was not, inasmuch as he was a whole-hearted believer in the best of all Beliefs, which the modern expounder of a "wrecking" policy or theory scouts as being untrue, absurd, and, therefore, unnecessary, and not to be taken seriously.

The close personal intimacy, the mutual affectionate regard of two such men as Dickens and Forster, is, I venture to suggest, proof sufficient, that complete community of principle, thought and idea were theirs.

Studying carefully the whole story of their friendship, it is impossible to come to any other conclusion. The two had a common belief, and both being sane creatures, brought together, for some good and reasonable purpose, by a wise and beneficent Creator, there could only be, as, indeed, there really was, but one inevitable result, that, indeed, which actually befell, viz. true oneness, and perfect accord between the two friends, from the first to the last day of their coming together. And when the cords were loosed; the link snapped that had bound each to other for just upon forty years, what did it mean for Forster?

Briefly this.

There were not many to carry Charles Dickens to his burial. His nearest and dearest only and a friend or two well-nigh as near and dear.

Among the latter, the tall, still burly figure, bowed through grief and disease, of John Forster was sadly conspicuous. Gone all that was autocratic and domi-

neering about him; gone the dignity, the imperiousness, the harsh "commandeering" of all else human to his own will and pleasure.

There remained only the true, inner, natural man, shaken with a sorrow, such as is not given to every man to feel. Himself hopelessly racked with physical pain, he appeared almost as if he were burying the better part of himself. This impression was told to me by one who was there, and it is easy to realise the truth and fidelity of the picture. He had lost his chief object in existence; which, until he himself went to join his friend, was, I am convinced, mainly sustained in and by the occupation of writing that friend's life. His state of health was such, that the physical as well as mental strain consequent upon such an effort must have been enormous, so that, with the completion of the work, those about him plainly perceived that the end was not far. But this is anticipating. There is much more to say concerning Forster, and others of his friends, before the final falling of the curtain. Yet it was but natural that I should be led to mention the effect the death of Dickens had upon the man whose love for his friend was indeed of a kind "passing the love of woman."

Dickens's friendship for Forster was, as has been already said, a real, self-absorbent thing; a bond breakable only by death; a whole-hearted, whole-souled, unselfish affection.

Let his own written word testify to this.

Writing from Doughty Street in 1837, a few months

only after their first foregathering at Ainsworth's, he says, in reply evidently to a letter from Forster accompanying a gift: "My dear Forster" (already they are addressing each other in the most intimate terms), "My and Mrs. Dickens's warmest thanks for this mark of your friendship and esteem, coupled with an expression of our most selfish hope that our friendship may be lasting as sincere, (as it undoubtedly proved to be).

"Believe that if I meant less, I should say a great deal more.

"Yours always,

"CHARLES DICKENS."

Apart from the "Dickens" biography, in itself a monumental work, Forster had—for many years—been industriously collecting material for his *Life of Swift;* and, the biography finished, he at once settled down to his labours—labours, however, which had their compensations, in the, to him, absorbing nature of his subject. The author of a monograph published in 1903, whose identity under the thin veil of anonymity it is not difficult to recognise, says of the first volume of Swift—all he lived to finish—that: "No one was so fitted by profound knowledge of the period." He further states that the first volume was "*leaden enough* . . . even with all allowance it was *a dull and conventional thing.*"

The italics are my own. The anonymous author of the monograph in question—"an old friend"—must forgive me for dissenting, wholly and entirely, from this

definitely-expressed judgment. Speaking personally, the fragment is most enjoyable, inducing regret that Forster did not live to complete his scheme. Although unassorted, unarranged, it pressed in upon me, from the very wealth and richness of it, that the remainder of the work, had he lived, would most certainly *not* have been "leaden," "dull," or "conventional."

Chapter VI: *A Marriage, and Some Personal Particulars*

FORSTER was undoubtedly a most impressionable man. He had a weakness for pretty women.

And yet this *Ursa Major*, this apparently confirmed bachelor, was ordained by Fate to enter the state matrimonial at forty-four. Two things may have accounted for this: a craving for more comfort, and an ambitious desire to climb the giddy social heights he had always in his mind's eye. He had for long been on especially intimate terms with Henry Colburn, the well-known publisher of that day, and his wife, formerly a Miss Crosbie. They lived, first in Bryanston Square, and subsequently, not long before Mr. Colburn's death, in Montagu Square. Henry Colburn, a little, bald-headed man, was in his business, astute to a degree. His wife was, I think, the most charming, the sweetest-natured woman it is possible to conceive. *Petite*, dainty in form and feature, she was, at the same time, clever and shrewd beyond the average woman of her day, and this, too, at a period when force of character and the possession of brains were by no means looked upon as desirable in maid, wife, or widow. Repression was the watchword, and keynote of female education, with a result, from the modern point of view, far from satis-

factory. Yet there were exceptions, and Eliza Colburn was one of the most notable.

Colburn was what was called in those days a " warm " man—financially that is—and when he died, left everything of which he died possessed, to his widow. She was thus, from the "dowry" point of view, a most desirable *parti*. She and Forster had always been the best of friends : her respect and admiration for the big, burly Northumbrian man of letters, being unbounded. How the matter of a match between them was arranged, no one, not even the most intimate of their relatives and friends, ever knew. But arranged it was, and, to the surprise of everybody, it was announced—I believe to Dickens first of all—that Henry Colburn's widow and John Forster had agreed to marry. The effect the news had upon Dickens, is comically expressed in a letter written by him to a member of his family.

He says : " I have the most prodigious, overwhelming, crushing, astounding, blinding, deafening, pulverising, scarifying secret of which Forster is the hero, imaginable, by the whole efforts of the whole British population. It is a thing of the kind that, after I knew it (from himself), this morning, I lay down flat, as if an engine and tender had fallen upon me." There is nothing ill-naturedly satirical, or sarcastic, in all this. It simply meant, that Dickens, who had a large capacity for seeing the humorous side of most things, save and except the more serious issues of life, gave himself up to the full enjoyment of the fun provided by this surprise matrimonial entertainment.

Dickens had too much regard for the prospective bride to be really otherwise than " nice " in his way of receiving the news. Eliza Colburn, both as wife and widow, was a favourite everywhere, and with everybody, and with no one more than with Dickens.

She was only too pleased to bestow herself and fortune upon John Forster, and was, for so long as he lived, the truest and best helpmeet man ever had. It was as adviser and friend, even more than as wife, that she influenced his life, looking after and keeping out of sight those troublesome, if necessary details, which, his nature considered, would but have irritated and hindered him. It was the same in his later days, when, disease-worn, and in agony almost beyond human bearing, her gentle ministrations soothed and comforted him, as no other earthly living soul could, I believe, have done. And he was not an easy man to deal with in sickness.

His autocratic, imperious spirit fumed and fretted behind the bars of his prison-house.

The restraint of a sick-bed was irksome to him beyond measure. But, bearing all, enduring all, sacrificing all, his devoted wife ministered to him to the end, the most faithful of all his faithful friends during twenty happy years.

Mr. Walter Frith, son of W. P. Frith, R.A., tells me that his sister distinctly remembers Mrs. Colburn, then a widow, coming in company with Forster on more than one annual Show Sunday to her father's studio to see the pictures for the forthcoming Academy.



MRS. JOHN FORSTER

From a crayon sketch by Sir Wm. Boxall, R.A.

Forster had a great opinion of Frith, alike as an artist and as a man. The straightforward John Bull bluntness of the painter peculiarly appealed to him; while the Hogarthian leanings, which Frith undoubtedly had—witness his "Road to Ruin" series—recommended him still more to Forster, as one being in sympathy with his own very pronounced eighteenth-century predilections. Frith's word-portrait of Forster in his *Reminiscences* is curiously apt—true to the life, indeed—confirming the description I have already given of him. "His brusque manner," says Frith, "produced a very unfavourable impression, but on better acquaintance it was evident enough, that the rough exterior concealed a generous heart, as well as a refined mind." Forster first met Frith in 1854, at a time when, according to present-day critics, British art was at its very lowest ebb. For a painting to be mid-Victorian, is, in these days, a virtual condemnation of it, *by those who know.* But do they? What about Constable, Maclise, Frith, Redgrave, Turner? Are these mid-Victorian masters to be relegated to the limbo of utter darkness and forgetfulness? Surely not! But art criticism is not my business, so I must not cross the path of those whose business it is.

From what I can make out, Forster, who, although having no previous acquaintance with Frith, intensely admired his work, sought out the artist for the purpose of getting him, if possible, to paint a portrait of Dickens for him. Frith was quite ready to accept the commission, and at once get on with the canvas. But there was an obstacle, raised by Forster, which, in the

end, delayed the painting of the picture for nearly four years.

This obstacle was nothing less than the great novelist's moustache, which he had now allowed to grow. Forster (I take the facts from Frith's *Reminiscences*), hated, nay, abhorred a moustache, and declared, in his ponderously decided fashion, that the portrait should wait until Dickens thought better of it, and shave the offending appendage off. But Dickens flatly refused to think better of it, and stood out for his right to do as he liked with his own face.

Completely routed, Forster gave in; the sittings were given, and the portrait completed. Dickens's own opinion about it is expressed in a letter to a friend, although I am not quite sure who it was—

"The beard saves me the trouble of shaving, and much as I admired my own appearance before I allowed my beard to grow, I admire it much more now, and never neglect, when an opportunity offers, to gaze my fill at myself. If any friends don't like my looks, I am not at all anxious for them to waste their time in studying them; and as to Frith, he would surely prefer to save himself the trouble of painting features which are so difficult as a mouth and chin. Besides, I have been told by some of my friends, that they highly approve of the change, because *they now see less of me.*"

Three of Frith's pictures, "The Derby Day," Ramsgate Sands," and "The Railway Station," had a great vogue at the time, and even now enjoy a large measure of popularity. "Dolly Varden," Forster's property,

and left by him to the Nation, is a delicious bit. Frith tells us, that Forster was ultra-liberal in his painting commission transactions. This was especially the case with his Dickens picture. He was equally generous with Maclise. Friendly as were the relations between Frith and Forster, the former could not be said to belong to the charmed inner circle of which Dickens, Maclise, Macready, and a few others were the bright particular stars. It was to his literary, and to a select few of his non-professional friends that Forster gave his whole heart and soul. In their company he was, in a great degree, a different being. Not that he ever entirely cast aside his natural pomposity, and dictatorial manner. Familiarity both in his own person and in others was *anathema* to him. He never quite threw off his dignity. The " arbitrary gent " of the well-known and oft-quoted cabman story fitted him to a T. Next to literary men, however, Forster loved the painting fraternity. He was a particularly shrewd art-critic, and in the course of his life accumulated a collection of pictures, prints and drawings which now has its home at South Kensington. As far as his means would allow him, he encouraged art in a practical way by purchasing from the artists such examples of their work as commended themselves to his judgment. He was ever the Painter's friend.

From Prof. Andrew Amos, an old friend, and one for whom he had the most affectionate regard, came a letter warmly congratulating Forster on his marriage. Amos was a very learned man, but more, he was, in spite of his learning, a good, kind-hearted soul,

and as such rejoiced in a large circle of congenial friends.

Forster's friendship with him dated from his own Pentonville days, when Amos was his law professor. Even when the exigencies of life caused them to drift apart, the mutual friendly feeling still continued to exist, an occasional letter from either one side or the other contributing to keep green the memory of early days.

Reference has been made to the fact, that Forster was a big, burly man. Some there were amongst his intimates who nicknamed him "hippopotamus." Two or three of his wife's young nephews, employing a somewhat clumsy contraction of this, dubbed their eminent relative "the mouse."

The boys, as did indeed most of the younger members of his family (he had no children of his own, by the way), always regarded him, in his presence, with a certain amount of awe. It was behind his back only, that they ventured to slyly sling the stone. True, they saw but little of him, Mrs. Forster paying most of her family visits alone. It would be a mistake to suppose that he was in any way neglectful of his wife; far from it: they lived in the closest accord. His literary pursuits it was that were the cause of his rare appearance with his wife on these occasions. The hardest of hard workers, he spared time only for those things which in themselves, and in his opinion, were of real importance. Then, he grudged nothing in the shape of time or trouble.

There is a characteristic letter of his to Bulwer which

well illustrates this. It is undated, although the time of its writing is, for all practical purposes, fixed for us by its subject matter being the first production by Macready of Lytton's *Richelieu.*

" Thursday morning.

" My dear Bulwer,

" A note of mine followed you all over London last night, but unsuccessfully.

" It was written in consequence of a ' haste, post haste ' dispatch which arrived here between 5 and 6 yesterday evening from our friend Macready.

" The Queen is going to see *Richelieu,* and had sent the Lord Chamberlain's Deputy to Macready to ask him for a copy of the play. Her message was to the effect, that *in any state* she was to have it—if practicable, in any way that night. A second messenger arrived to tell me that proofs would do. Meanwhile, I had dispatched my Mercury to Hertford Street, and after an unsuccessful search for you, he brought back my note. I then (a little before 8) started off myself to Saunders and Otley, where I gave instructions from you of a very peremptory kind, which they told me should be faithfully attended to. I hope they have been. My boy is going to call as he takes this missive to you—to ascertain—so that by asking him, you will know. . . . D'Orsay, by the way, in writing to me yesterday, asked if I could oblige him with the sight of a copy from you. May this be ? and will you send it, or shall I ?

"Lastly!! *I have the box here for to-night—the lower stage box*—I herewith enclose it. At 5 you will be here?

"Ever and always yours,
"JOHN FORSTER."

The Queen of course had her wish; a proof copy of the play being sent to the palace.

There is a curious thing connected with this letter, which, it will be at once inferred, had, by some means, come back into Forster's possession. It is in the Forster MSS. Collection at South Kensington, the explanation of its return to the writer of it being simply this—

On the back of the letter Bulwer has scrawled the following doggerel lines addressed to his correspondent—

"If jealous Kitely cease to fill thy soul,
Remember Blanchard, and return the proof,
E're scrawl'd by Buckstone, or by Jerrold slurr'd,
Brief is my time, for Gallia's coasts I steer,
If thou writest soon, direct thine answer here.
.
Maldain—November—thou the year can'st hit on,
Honour to Kitely!—Health to Forster!—Lytton."

It may probably be taken as certain, that Forster *did* return the proof unharmed. He might be safely trusted to keep the sacrilegious hands of little Buckstone and great little Jerrold from "scrawling" upon and "slurring" the precious papers. But all this meant "taking pains"—the greatest of pains—and Forster, of all men, had that faculty to perfection. Whether the "proof" referred to was that sent to the Queen, or the one lent to D'Orsay (if it *was* so lent), or whether it was neither,

it is difficult now to determine, but my own opinion is, that, in effect, it was one and the same, D'Orsay being permitted probably to have " a sight " of it, on its return by her Majesty. Through it all, it is interesting to note the scrupulousness of Forster; his perfect reliability; with not the slightest tendency towards deviation either to the right hand or to the left. It was this that made men trust as well as love him; that stamped him the ideal counsellor and friend, the one man of all others whom to know was to know through and through, and to believe in to the uttermost. Even with Dickens it was the same. Ever were coming those short, crisp, insistent notes containing entreaties for Forster's advice and opinion. " What do you think ? "—" Is that the sort of thing you would advise ? "—or, " I am inclined to do it, let me have your opinion at once." In these days we rejoice in an Official Trustee; an Official Arbitrator; I verily believe that, were he alive now, a position would be found for John Forster, as the Official Friend and Adviser : the Universal Confidant. Seriously, he filled a niche in the literary and social life of his time so admirably and successfully, that his name and fame ought, even in this generation of short memories, to be better known and appreciated than it really is.

Not so very long ago I was talking to a lady friend, whose childhood and early life were passed in the neighbourhood of Hans Place, Chelsea. It suddenly occurred to me to question her as to any traditionary knowledge she might have with regard to that ill-fated writer of verse—poetess, in the true sense of the word, she was not—Letitia Elizabeth Landon, known to her

contemporaries and in literary records as L. E. L. Of course my friend not having been born until nearly twelve years after L. E. L.'s death, could not possibly have any personal recollections of the lady, but distinctly remembers being often told by her mother of the somewhat eccentric lady who was born, and for nearly twenty years of her life, lived at No. 25 Hans Place. All that my friend was able to tell me, fully confirmed such scant information as I have been successful in unearthing with regard to Miss Landon, whose name, as I venture to think, has been most unwarrantably coupled with that of Forster. "One of His Friends," from whose monograph I have already quoted, definitely states that the pair were "actually engaged," but fails to produce his authority. I am afraid that the statement must be appraised at the same value as that which undoubtedly attaches to the rest of O. O. H. F.'s paragraph on the subject. "He had *no doubt* pushed (her) well forward in the *Examiner*."—"The fair poetess *generally contrived* to enlist the affections of her editors."—"*We can see from his Memoirs how attracted he was by her*."—"The engagement was broken off, *it is believed*, through the arts of Dr. Maguin, and *it is said* that Forster behaved exceedingly well in the transaction."

These are just generalities, surmisings, nothing more, and really prove nothing. Laman Blanchard, who should have known the truth about it, is absolutely silent on the subject. Forster, as I have elsewhere said, was certainly of an impressionable nature, and in his "salad" days was, I have no doubt, attracted, not once, nor twice, by bright eyes and a winsome way, but to



LETITIA ELIZABETH LANDON

From an engraving by J. Thomson of the painting by Daniel Maclise, R.A.

construct a definite statement upon the basis of a mere inference, is not only bad logic, but contrary to the first principles of friendship and fair dealing. There is nothing, in the nature of documentary evidence, which in any way warrants the assertion that L. E. L. was engaged to be married to John Forster. That, like Jerdan, and many another editor, he was attracted by her unconventional personality may be taken as true and undeniable, but that it was anything more than a simple attraction, I absolutely refuse to believe.

Briefly stated, the story of L. E. L.'s literary and social career is sufficiently sad without seeking to add to it by implying scandal where no scandal exists. The facts are simply these. Born in 1802, Letitia Landon in due course was sent to a school kept by a Miss Rowden at No. 22 Hans Place. She remained there for a few months only, having for fellow pupils two such future notabilities as Miss Mary Mitford and Lady Caroline Lamb. The latter's chief claim to distinction, however, is that she was beloved of Byron, a rather doubtful honour, everything considered. In Hans Place, Miss Landon continued to live with her father, until, in the early twenties, the family removed to the Old Brompton Road.

Mr. Landon numbered among his friends Jerdan, editor of the *Literary Gazette*, in its day an important journal. Jerdan, not unnaturally, published some poems of Letitia's, over the pen-name of L. E. L., continuing to do so for some years.

This conquering of the royal road to fame was bitterly resented by other literary aspirants who could

not compass the same facilities for publication, and, indeed, as Blanchard tells us, by the whole army of poets, good, bad, and indifferent. With jealous rage, they each and all combined to pick the poor girl's character to pieces, society looking on and enjoying the spectacle.

Miss Landon's feelings may be imagined, so that when Colonel Maclean, Governor of Cape Coast Castle, offered her marriage, she accepted, as a way of escaping from the terrible persecution that was making her life a veritable burden to her. Beyond recording the fact, that she died soon after her arrival in Africa under peculiarly distressing circumstances, we are not concerned with the details, or the subsequent Government inquiry.

Poor L. E. L.! from every account we have of her, including that of Laman Blanchard, the most authoritative, it would seem, incontestably, that she was more sinned against than sinning. A man may exercise his super-impressionability—or worse—with impunity, he being, from a social standpoint, "not a penny the worse."

Yet let the "weaker vessel" evince but the slightest inclination towards amorous admiration for here-and-there members of the opposite sex, people hold up their hands in holy horror, and cry "Shame!" each from the top of his or her pedestal, until they are throat-tired and breathless. Unfortunately, as in the case of L. E. L., the prejudice engendered by the ill-advised and mischievous malignity of evil tongues, lives long and dies hard. So with poor Letitia Landon: no one, of the few to whom her name and history are superficially known,

now has a good word for her; while her alleged love-affairs are improved upon and distorted, until, like the Irishman and his old stocking, there is practically nothing left of the original.

Reference has been made to the charge brought against Forster in connection with his *Life of Dickens*, that, wholly, or in part, he ignored those of the latter's friends, mention of whom in justice to their several memories, and for the proper telling of the great novelist's life-story, ought to, and should have been made. With regard to this, Mr. Ellis is, I think, right, when he suggests that this is probably the cause of the biassed views held by many of Dickens's friends anent the "Forster" biography. Says Mr. Ellis: "Personal friends were dissatisfied with it. James Crossley, the famous bibliophile, speaking of Forster, said, 'I cannot call him the successful biographer of Dickens.' And Ainsworth observed, 'I see he only tells half the story.' Both men were displeased, not to say angry, at being "overlooked," and they were only two out of many.

Forster's reply to these disappointed critics, or rather to their criticisms, was, whatever may be our own private opinion, reasonable and to the point. He very truly says that, as Dickens's biographer, his first duty was towards his friend.

This duty he considered he could best fulfil by limiting reference, in large measure, to his own friendship with Dickens, inasmuch as it was with that that he was most familiar, and to which, consequently, he could do most justice. He urged, too, that the work, already of big dimensions, would not bear the inclusion of other matter

or material, as it would tend to swell it into something of quite undue proportions. Forster had a very delicate task to perform, and, all things considered, he may be said to have done it "well and truly." That "everybody" would be satisfied was more than could be expected, seeing the large number of interests involved.

That he succeeded so well is greatly to his credit, while his book will most certainly live as long as the name and work of Dickens are household words in the hearts and homes of his countrymen.

There are one or two friendships of Forster's which may, for obvious reasons, be classed as intimacies of a purely private character, as dissociated from those of a literary and artistic nature, and which, therefore, may fitly be considered in this chapter.

Of these "private" friendships, two stand out in especially bold relief. The Rev. Whitwell Elwin, Rector of Booton, Norwich, and Sir Richard Quain, famous physician, and still more famous friend of famous men. Elwin was a most charming personality. I only met him once—in the middle sixties I think it was—but he impressed me as being the one man of all others fitted to soften the hard surface-corners of Forster, whose affection for him was really beautiful—touching, indeed, in the very simplicity of its abandonment. Elwin's response to this exceptional regard, was just what might have been expected of one of his sweetly sensitive nature. In his own gravely gentle way, we can picture the amiable, unassertive Norfolk parson as "toning down" the asperities and dogmatic assertiveness of Forster's style and manner in some special "laying down of the

law " on a disputed question. His was the calming influence of oil on troubled waters. To have succeeded in curbing the overbearing boisterousness of Forster is a great thing to be placed to the credit of Whitwell Elwin. His personal appearance was, in a way, deceptive. Spare, clean-limbed, the picture of health and muscular activity, he gave the impression of being immensely strong—as possibly he was, naturally; but the gentleness and tender simplicity of his disposition tempered any inclination he may have had to exert his bodily strength as a matter of use and habit.

Cultured, scholarly, and with the critical faculty developed beyond the average, Whitwell Elwin's mental equipment it was, undoubtedly, that mainly made for the foundation of Forster's regard and esteem. He was a veritable human encyclopædia of general, especially eighteenth-century, lore. He had, too, an exceptional gift for research, which was ever at the service of his friends. Painstaking to a fault—if that be possible—he spared himself as little for others as he did in the case of his own concerns. Forster's affection for Dickens was, as we know, very deep and real, but there was an indefinable difference in his love for Whitwell Elwin. One might try and reason out the true cause and genesis of it; endeavour to discover the secret, but it would be only labour in vain, for not even the two men themselves, I take it, were in a position to solve the mystery. They just found in each other something they both needed, and troubled little, or not at all, about the why or the wherefore. Elwin was at times very trying, for he was a man of moods and fancies. " Nerves " some people

call it, but the word does not, to my thinking, fit this particular case, for Whitwell Elwin, if I am not mistaken, never suffered from hypochondria (" nerves " is largely hypochondriacal) in any shape or form. He was too—what shall I say ?—too *straight-hewn* for anything of the invertebrate, mamby-pamby sort. There was nothing of that kind about his mood-changings. He was erratic, and that is all one can say about it. On occasion, too, he could be doggedly obstinate; as, when writing the appreciative memoir of his dead friend, he, in spite of Mrs. Forster's earnest entreaties, refused absolutely to withdraw his description of Forster's father as a Newcastle butcher. " One of His Friends," adds, that Mrs. Forster in deep distress protested to him that she " in vain had entreated him (Elwin) to leave this matter aside. Even granting its correctness," she urged, " what need or compulsion to mention it ? It was infinitely painful to her. But it was not true : Forster's father was a large ' grazier,' or dealer in cattle." Elwin, however, was inflexible; some Newcastle alderman had hunted up entries in old books, and he thought the evidence convincing. It was in the nature of the man, I suppose, to do his duty, at the cost even of his tenderest feelings.

As a matter of fact he was what may be best described as a multi-minded man, gentle-hearted, and with a soul so big, that it took in all the world; and yet, at the same time, unyielding and with a stern sense of that which he conceived to be his duty. Such was Whitwell Elwin, and Forster's friend; a man who must command our admiration and respect. Forster's loving regard for

him was such, that he would have no one else to officiate at his marriage to Mrs. Colburn in 1856. So Elwin left his Norfolk hermitage, and travelled to London to perform the ceremony. It is not to be wondered at that Forster appointed him, together with Lord Lytton and Justice Chitty, one of his executors. To avoid, I expect, any possibility of Elwin's refusal, Forster did this without consulting his old friend, knowing full well that he would carry out his (Forster's) wishes to the very letter. As, indeed, he did, using his discretion, however, somewhat indiscreetly, more particularly with regard to the letters of Browning to Forster.

Both Elwin and his son Warwick, who edited his father's *Memoirs*, have long since passed away, so that there is now but little hope that the mystery of the Browning and Forster correspondence will ever be satisfactorily solved. My own exhaustive inquiries in Norfolk, and other likely localities, to try and get on the track of things, have only resulted, however, in a "no find." It may be argued, and often is, and has been, that the matter is of no great importance, but, in view of Browning and Forster's unhappy estrangement, a state of things which, by the way, continued right down to the day of Forster's death, I cannot but think that any discovery that would right the wrong, if wrong there were, would be a delightful tribute to the memory of two great men of letters, who, until they, for some very vaguely explained reason, fell apart, walked before heaven and earth as friends. But such a discovery is—alas!—a hopeless improbability now. And then, again, possibly nobody cares.

Sir Richard Quain, physician-in-ordinary, by common consent and friendly warrant to the literary and artistic world of his day, was a truly notable personality. But he was even more than this; he was the friend-in-chief of every individual man of letters upon his list of patients. More, he never drew the line; the humblest literary scribbler, or son of the brush and palette, might as safely depend upon Richard Quain's devotion and care, as might the man of the greatest intellect and eminence. He never made money; it was not possible with one who regarded "fees" as something of quite secondary consideration. How many of the poor of spirit, as of pocket, who will assuredly rise up and call him blessed, it would be impossible to say, for they were legion. A single-minded, large-hearted Irishman, of a singularly affectionate nature, he liked everybody, even as everybody liked him. His was the charm of manner, the persuasiveness that inspires confidence. And his advice to his literary and artistic friends was not restricted to the purely professional. Richard Quain was, in a general sense, a wise man, whose opinion and counsel in most things was always to the point and of value, and appreciated to the full by those to whom it was offered.

Such was the man who, both as doctor and friend, attended Forster for many years, and was with him when the end came—faithful to the very last. Forster's own faith in Quain was childlike almost in the completeness of his surrender to the other, both as physician and friend. It was well that it was so, as it enabled the doctor to adopt drastic remedies and measures with a

sureness of mind and hand, which otherwise might have been adversely influenced to the prejudice, and perhaps worse, of the patient. That Sir Richard was with Lord Beaconsfield in his last moments, is interesting, not so much because of the rank of his distinguished patient, but by reason of the similarity of the cases. Both Forster and Disraeli placed themselves unreservedly and without question in Quain's hands, in the sure and certain belief that he would not only do his best for them, but the best that—humanly speaking—could be done.

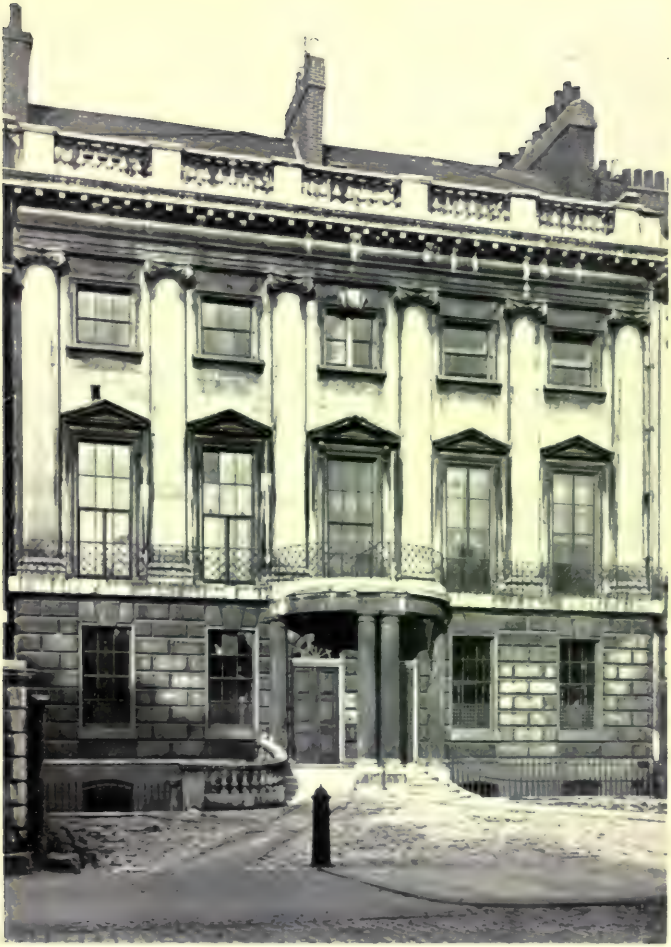
That Quain could not save Forster was not his fault; it simply meant that the limit of human aid and skill had been reached. It is with the Divine only that "all things are possible."

Before concluding this chapter it seems right to add a little more about Mrs. Forster, whose quiet, gentle nature contributed so much to make her husband's social position the success his ambition desired that it should be. Forster had large ideas in this direction; loved, above all things, to do everything *en prince*. Left to himself, he would certainly have failed to realise both his ideas and his ambitions. Then Eliza Colburn came into his life, and, as in the fairy story, the wand was waved and all was changed. The dreary chambers in Lincoln's Inn Fields, which "One of His Friends" seems to think Forster in after years remembered with regret, were soon forgotten in the new splendours and better comfort of Palace Gate House, where his wife presided with a grace and charm little short of perfection. She was the very essence of tact, invariably doing the right thing at the right moment, and in the right way.

Her calls at our house were certainly not frequent; confined mainly to when she was Mrs. Colburn, and when I was quite a lad; but I distinctly remember how sweet and nice she was to my dear mother, who at that time, and to the end of her life, was practically an invalid. In those days Christmas gifts were a great institution, the writings of Charles Dickens tending greatly to influence the revival of this amongst other seasonable customs. We children were always agog with excitement as Christmastide approached, for we knew that Mrs. Colburn would not forget us, as, indeed, she never did. But with her second marriage the old state of things altered altogether, presents, visits—all communication, in fact—vanishing like an Arabian Nights' Dream. John Forster was, it must be confessed, an exacting husband, a despot in his own house, one whose " word was law " for all who were in any way dependent upon him.

Like the majority of literary men—artists generally, in fact—he was irritable to a degree, and his gentle little wife (she was daintily small) must have taken her courage with both hands when she elected to marry him. She was not strong; seemed to me, young as I was, very frail.

After Forster's death she suffered much, while there was every indication that all through the terrible time of her husband's failing health and last long illness, she herself was far from being well, was, indeed, in a state calling for especial care and attention. Of a surety, Eliza Forster must ever have a foremost place amongst the number of those wives of notable men, who, subordin-



JOHN FORSTER'S HOUSE, 58 LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS, LONDON

From a photograph by T. W. Tarrell

ating self to the interests, comfort, and, not seldom, the caprices of their husbands, have won name and honour, which will live, I believe, as long as that of the men, of genius and reputation, howsoever great, with whom their lives and fortunes were linked and identified.

Chapter VII : *Forster and Stratford-on-Avon*

THE reader will recall a passing reference to the Guild of Literature and Art, to aid in establishing which, Dickens, with the co-operation of many clever friends in both professions, organised a series of dramatic performances in London and the provinces. Since the words were written, however, much valuable and interesting information with regard to this wonderful tour, has reached me from various quarters, notably from Alderman Colbourne of Shakespeare's own town of " Stratforde-on-ye-Avon," from Mr. William Salt Brassington, F.S.A., Librarian and Curator of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, and from Mr. Frederick C. Wellstood, M.A., Secretary and Librarian to the trustees and guardians of Shakespeare's birthplace.

Forster says, with regard to the efforts made by Dickens and his friends to establish the Guild, that the whole thing was a failure, implying that it was so in every respect, especially financially, always excepting the artistic success of the dramatic performances, which was as great as it was deserved. In this latter connection, and as " rounding-off," as it were, my previous mention of Sir John Tenniel, the following brief extract from a letter of Dickens to Forster—quoted by the

latter in the *Life*—and written from Manchester at the close of the "tour," is especially interesting and to the point: "You have no idea," writes Boz, "how good Tenniel, Topham, and Collins (Wilkie) have been in what they had to do." High praise this from Dickens, who, in all matters pertaining to stage work, was exacting to a degree. "Wilkie Collins"—to quote Forster again—"became, for all the rest of the life of Dickens, one of his dearest and most valued friends." In the Birthplace Library at Stratford, Mr. Wellstood has found a most interesting volume of papers relating to, among other things, the various performances undertaken by the famous amateurs in 1852 to raise a fund to endow a curatorship for Shakespeare's birthplace. The papers were collected by T. Purland, to whom I shall have to refer later on in connection with the acquisition of the Birthplace for the Nation.

Amongst the papers are copies of the various playbills. With references to *Every Man in His Humour*, there is a note in T. Purland's handwriting, which runs: "The acting was, generally good, C. Dickens and J. Forster in particular, but the costumes were awfully bad: Kitely and Cob were the only characters correctly dressed. Very poor audiences on both nights (May the 15th and 17th, 1848). Expenses heavy."

Mr. Purland was a member, with Forster, who was chairman, and Peter Cunningham, of the London Committee, for the raising of the fund to purchase the birthplace.

John Forster's first visit to the historic Warwickshire town was in April 1840. Joining Dickens and Maclise

at Birmingham on a holiday trip to celebrate the publication of *Master Humphrey's Clock*, the members of the First Triumvirate journeyed south by way of Stratford and Lichfield. To visit Samuel Johnson's birth-town was, in Forster's case, peculiarly appropriate, in view of his own characteristic resemblance to the "Great Chain of Literature." It does not need a very great stretch of imagination to conceive this first visit of Forster to Stratford as having sown the seed which afterwards bore such good fruit, in the shape of his suggestion, that Shakespeare's birthplace, then in private hands, should be purchased by and for the Nation, and placed for good guardianship in the hands of trustees, who should be responsible for its due and proper upkeep and preservation to the Department of Woods and Forests.

At least, that has always been my impression, that which, indeed, I have all my live been given to understand, and which, with a view to getting a verification of tradition, specially took me down to Shakespeare's own town in the early summer of this year, 1912. Pursuing my investigations along the lines I have indicated, and in the spirit of all that I remember to have heard on the subject "in the days of my youth," the result, to my intense satisfaction, far exceeded my most sanguine expectations. The story, as told to me by Mr. Wellstood (who has spared no pains in searching through the past records of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust), is, I think, worth re-telling here in some detail. It may be as well, perhaps, first to say that the Birthplace Visitors' Book for the year 1840, taken away with other things by a

Mrs. Hornby, went to America and was sold. Where it is now no one knows, so that it is impossible to ascertain whether Forster signed the book or not. Of course, the absence of signatures proves nothing with regard to the visit of Forster, Dickens, and Maclise to the birthplace in 1840, as Forster himself records the fact in the *Life*, which of course settles the question.

To go no farther back than the historic Jubilee, organised by Garrick in the year 1769, and at which Boswell, as Johnson would have said, " made a fool of himself, sir ! " Stratford-on-Avon has always fully recognised and lived up to its privilege as being the birthplace of William Shakespeare. A few weak-witted folk may say that Francis Bacon, Viscount Verulam of St. Albans, Lord High Chancellor of England, and Keeper of the King's conscience, condescended to play ghost to him of Stratford; to write those wondrous Tragedies, Comedies, and Poems, and, with a marvellous modesty, that did him infinite credit, to give Honest Will the glory, and if deed and parchment, to say nothing of well-authenticated tradition, do not lie, the not insignificant profits of the same. These good, simple-minded people to the contrary, notwithstanding, however, Stratford still continues to cherish the memory of William Shakespeare, the player-poet, but for my Lord Verulam of St. Albans, it has nothing but—well—you never hear his name mentioned, except by visitors—generally Americans—who are " curious to know, you know."

But, seriously, Stratford is proud of its Shakespeare, whom it is its delight to honour. The very atmosphere

of the place is redolent of him. You pass along Henley Street, for instance, and every few yards you come to some ancient Elizabethan dwelling, low-roofed, timber-walled. The entrance is through a pointed Tudor archway, at the end of a long, dark passage appearing a wonderful sun-lit glory of green leaves, and old-world blossoms of every hue under heaven. It is a picture which compels you to stay and gaze in sheer rapt enjoyment and delight.

So Forster must have gazed and wondered, for with all his mental leanings towards the judicial, he loved the beautiful, in Nature as in Art, and more than all he loved the grey, quiet, solemn beauty of the past, the still living reminder of the "has been." One can picture him in that April of 1840, standing silent and self-absorbed, in the quaint, low-ceiled room in which "our Will" first saw the light.

One can conceive the re-creator for us of poor Noll Goldsmith, vowing in his soul that, given him life and opportunity, some day he would do his share in waking Shakespeare's countrymen to a sense of the duty they owed to his memory, by nationalising the house in which he was born, and preserving it for the delight of the people of this England of ours for ever. How this dream materialised will now be seen.

On February the 13th, 1851, within a month only of ten years from the date of Forster's first visit to Stratford, a meeting of the Royal Shakespearian Club was held at the Town Hall, Stratford-on-Avon, when the subject of the custodianship of the Shakespeare birthplace having been discussed, it was resolved that

a report embodying the views of the Stratford committee as to the future custody of the house should be remitted to Mr. Forster, as chairman of the London committee.

The London committee, under the chairmanship of John Forster, then met, on the 15th of the same month, and passed a resolution that a sub-committee, consisting of four members of the London committee and three members of the Stratford committee, be appointed, with power to conduct a negotiation with the Government on the basis of the propositions of August the 26th, 1847, and to report the result to the London committee.

The members of the London committee were: John Payne Collier, Shakespearian scholar, Peter Cunningham, antiquarian and man of letters; John Forster (chairman), and Charles Knight, the eminent publishing reformer. The three members of the Stratford committee were: Dr. Thomson, Charles Holt Bracebridge, and Mr. Flower. It seems from the records, still existing at Stratford, that Forster and Peter Cunningham took upon themselves the oversight of both committees' accounts, which, considering the former's clearness of vision in such matters, could not be otherwise than satisfactory, and a practical guarantee for the financial success of the scheme.

It is the more desirable that one should give the whole story (or, at least, so much of it as Mr. Wellstood has been able to gather from the old original records in his charge), in order that Forster's chief share in the matter may, once and for all, be established. To have mainly helped to secure such a treasure as the birthplace of England's great player-poet, is no mean distinction,

the recognition of Forster's undoubted claim to which has been so long and unaccountably delayed, that the neglect savours not a little of national ingratitude. That Forster was the real moving spirit of the undertaking—save in the only too-frequent intervals when he was temporarily laid aside by severe attacks of the disease, which ultimately killed him in the very heyday of his career—is perfectly clear, from the record of that which took place at a special meeting of the Royal Shakespearian Club at the Town Hall, Stratford, on April the 23rd, 1853. It appears from this, that Forster, as chairman of the London committee, had on his own initiative entered into negotiations with the Chief Commissioner of Woods and Forests with a view to the Shakespearian property being transferred to the guardianship of the Crown, as a part of the property of the Nation. This action of Forster's met with, as might be expected, the unanimous and unqualified approval of both committees; he himself promising to make public the result, when known, with as little delay as possible. So successful was Forster in his friendly negotiation with Lord John Manners, the Chief Commissioner, that his Lordship undertook to introduce a Bill into Parliament, its object the transferring of Shakespeare's house to the Office of Her Majesty's Works and Public Buildings in perpetuity; official notice of such Bill to be duly advertised in the *London Gazette*.

Two events, however—the first quite unexpected—intervened to delay the presentation of the Bill. There was a sudden and unforeseen change of Administration;

while, just before the re-assembling of Parliament, Forster was confined to his room by severe illness, thus rendering necessary the indefinite postponement of all personal communication with the new Minister. Later, still unable himself to call upon the Chief Commissioner, and fearing that the opportunity of getting the Bill under way for the then session may have slipped past, he requested the Minister to see Mr. Cunningham, the treasurer of the London committee, as being as fully informed on the matter as was he (Forster) himself.

With this, in consequence of his continued ill-health, ends Forster's active connection with the movement, which eventually, however, as is well known, was in the course of time successful in placing a relic of so purely national a character under the guardianship of the Crown.

I do not apologise for occupying so much space with this subject, inasmuch as it seems only just to Forster's memory, that he should have the full credit for his share of the good work, so far as I am able to establish it. It is written : " The good that men do lives after them." Perhaps ! but I am not so sure that it is so in all cases. Certainly it was not in this particular instance, and it will be a matter of great pride and delight to me, if any poor work and words of mine, shall in anywise have contributed to the coming of John Forster into his own, as the nineteenth-century friend of Honest Will Shakespeare.

Many and interesting are the stories concerning Forster and his friends, including Dickens, told to me at " first hand " by certain " good men and true " of

Stratford, who are to-day old enough to remember, and, in some cases, to have had personal acquaintance with some of the merry band of Bohemians—the " splendid strollers "—who in the course of that wonderful tour of which I have spoken broke their journey at the old Warwickshire town in order to " see the sights " and to breathe-in the atmosphere of this old, old world picture of the days of Good Queen Bess. In the wide Market Street—which Alderman Colbourne tells me, originally had, running down its centre, a row of old timbered houses, so that the now spacious street was really two narrow lanes, dark and dangerous, as were nearly all such at that benighted—or was it " glorious "—period ? —about half-way down, on the left-hand side—the old Market-House being, centrally, at the head of the street, behind you—is the famous old hostelry, *The Red Horse*, beloved of Washington Irving, who stayed there, during his memorable visit to Stratford: I forget exactly the year. Anyway, the author of *Rip Van Winkle* is to-day more than a mere memory in the old Stratford house, for not only is there a Washington Irving parlour, but it is full of relics of the great American writer, including the well-preserved curious old Chippendale arm-chair, which may still be seen behind the glass doors of a wall cupboard. The owner, Alderman Colbourne, was, he tells me, compelled to adopt this precautionary measure owing to the predatory " whittling ways " of our globe-trotting American cousins. The whole tone of the room is suggestive of the period when the eighteenth century was hastening to its death, and when the nineteenth century had hardly cut its first tooth.



RED HORSE HOTEL, STRATFORD-ON-AVON

From a drawing by H. S. Rhodes

Could the walls of this not over-large apartment but speak, they could tell of strange happenings.

Talks about the new nation on the other side the Atlantic, daily gathering strength and reputation as a Free and Independent Republic. Stories of that wonderfully beautiful country round about "Sunnyside," on the stately Hudson; of the War of Independence; of the Red Man's Folk-lore, and of a thousand-and-one delightfully interesting things, which, told as Irving would tell them, would not fail to charm the ears, and brighten the eyes of each member of the sacred little circle assembled round the fire, in the room which now bears the name of the guest from the "New Beyond." Of course, all this was long before the time of Alderman Colbourne, the present proprietor of *The Red Horse* Hotel. But that is not to say that he is not brimful of information and anecdote concerning other notable Americans who in his day have "put up" with him, or his family, and thereby added to the glory of the old house. It may be of interest to relate some little of that which he told me, in this connection, before mentioning his recollections of Forster, Dickens and others of the illustrious company of "splendid strollers," who halted for a brief space at *The Red Horse*. When it is stated that the worthy Alderman has received at his house as guests Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, the poet, and that great Transatlantic essayist, Ralph Waldo Emerson, the Carlyle of America, and that Mr. Colbourne is a highly intellectual man, and a fine conversationalist, it will be at once seen that the elements are present for the making

of a specially interesting reminiscent relation. Mr. Colbourne, who delights in telling all he knows about these famous people, "o'er and o'er again," told me, whilst chatting in the Washington Irving parlour, that of the two men, Longfellow and Emerson, it was the former whom he knew best. Emerson made but a brief visit, and was, said the Alderman, an introspective, reserved, but gentle-voiced man, who, like most philosophers, both English and American, desired more than anything else to be left alone, and to be allowed to think out his thoughts in peace. Emerson can never be said to have been a *friend* of Forster's, in the full sense of the term, they were but correspondents, though the English man of letters used every persuasive argument to lure his Amerian brother-scribe to visit his (Forster's) house and table during the stay of the former in London. But I fancy the meeting never took place, although I am not quite sure on the point. One thing Mr. Colbourne is quite certain about, and that is, that Emerson gave practically no trouble, settled his bills without comment, and never worried himself about what he ate or drank—a simple-living soul indeed, as are most philosophers; one who cared little for appearance and "show," and still less for notoriety.

Now, the poet was a man of an altogether different stamp, save in one particular, a gentleness of voice and manner. I do not think Forster's foregatherings with Longfellow were really many, for the latter's visits to England were limited, I fancy, to two—or three at the most—and it is evident from several letters of Longfellow in the Forster collection at South Kensington, excusing

himself, on the score of his numerous engagements, for not being able to accept Forster's repeated invitations, that the two men could not have met often. Longfellow was, however, a good correspondent, if a somewhat voluminous one. He was also—and Mr. Colbourne endorses this—very confidential to whomsoever he might be talking to, for the time being, or to whom he might be writing.

Witness his letter to Forster of May 1845.

He writes of his intended marriage. "He and Forster," he says, "were the jolliest of all the youths at Dickens's table in the autumn of 1842."

He is super-confidential on the matter of his matrimonial arrangements, confidences which I can imagine Forster scanning with a smile of tolerant, good-humoured contempt. Twenty-two years later he writes: "Dickens was here (at Sunnyside) last night. . . . It is a great pleasure to see Dickens again after so many years, with the same sweetness and flavour as of old." Longfellow was a great admirer of Dickens's genius, as was he also of Dickens the man. It was the dramatic in *Boz* which specially attracted the author of *Hiawatha*, and the *Courtship of Miles Standish*. In the "Irving" room is a "sketch-book" relic, one, in fact, familiar the world over—it is the grandfathers' clock which originally stood in the old sexton's cottage. I rather think that it still goes, and even keeps good time—or that Mr. Colbourne told me that it does both. When we consider that this gentleman's recollections go back fifty-five or fifty-six years, and that he could only be in his late teens at the time of the earliest of them, it is certainly

not a little wonderful that his memory should be so bright and clear.

From several letters to Forster, written in 1845, while in England, it is evident that Emerson, like Longfellow, being unable to accept Forster's hospitality, was grievously disappointed thereat. He much desired to meet the "English Dr. Johnson"—as Forster has been called, then and since—and it is curious to speculate as to what might have happened had the meeting really taken place. A few shorthand notes of the "possible" conversation, would now have a value far and away greater than many a published "interview," puffed and advertised into notice by Press and participants for purely, or, let us say, obviously commercial purposes.

Mr. Colbourne, by the way, remembers the famous "tour," as, too, does another old Stratfordian, Mr. William Hutchings. It is quite a graphic picture that the former gives us of the London coach drawing out of the old gateway of *The Red Horse*, with Dickens, Forster, and the rest of the merry crowd, shouting from the roof of it a right rollicking "good-bye!" to a group of Stratford worthies assembled outside in the street to see these great people depart. It was a truly exciting time for these good country-town folk. Many and notable were the personages coming and going in those days, even as they come and go now, but to have Charles Dickens, the creator of the immortal *Pickwick*, and *Little Nell*, on view, as it were, to such advantage, with nothing and no one intervening to spoil the picture, why, it was the very essence of enjoyable privilege!



FACSIMILE OF A PAGE FROM THE VISITORS' BOOK AT SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTHPLACE, 1852

Then, quite suddenly, the while the four well-fed, well-turned-out horses are fretting at the curb, and straining at trace and chain, Dickens discovers that he is in need of "change." A message is immediately sent to the manager of the local bank, whose name, Mr. Colbourne thinks, was "Guppy" ("a young man by the name of Guppy"—vide *Bleak House*), for a Guppy was certainly living in Stratford in those days. It is a moot point whether Dickens himself sent the message to the bank-manager, or if Forster dispatched it in Dickens's name. However that may have been, the message as delivered to Mr. "Guppy" was to the effect that "Boz wanted a cheque cashed." "Boz! Boz!" said the manager. "Who the deuce is Boz?—I cannot cash cheques for Boz!" When it was explained that "Boz" was Charles Dickens (a fact one would have thought the bank-manager "Guppy" to have been well acquainted with), the man of money immediately altered his tone; the cheque was cashed, abject apologies tendered, and the fully-laden coach drove away from the door of the old *Red Horse* amid a salvo of cheers and laughter, and a perfect white cloud of waving handkerchiefs.

Mr. Colbourne has some specially interesting recollections of the individual members of the distinguished touring party, all of whose names are inscribed in the Visitors' Book of the house for the year 1853. I am afraid Forster did not appeal to him very strongly. But, as I ventured to suggest to Mr. Colbourne, Forster possibly would, on such an occasion, and amid strange surroundings, have been hardly likely to come out of

his shell. He would probably adopt the " big bow-wow " manner, which even his closest intimates always admitted he could do to perfection. The worthy Alderman candidly confessed that while he did not care much for Forster's pompous way, and dictatorial style generally, he could not fail to be impressed with the curiously protective attitude as towards his friend Dickens. " It was," said Mr. Colbourne, " almost pathetic, the look of affectionate concern with which he watched the other's every movement. I have never seen anything like it, before or since." Among the professional ladies who formed part of the company, was dear old Mrs. Compton, wife of Henry Compton, the famous comedian under Buckstone's management at the Haymarket, and the finest impersonator of Shakespeare's clowns—Touchstone, for example—the English stage has ever known. Mother of Edward Compton, the well-known actor-manager of to-day, Mrs. Compton in '53 was not by any means an old lady, Mr. Colbourne remembering her as being full of vivacity, and ever with a smile in her eyes and a witty remark on her lips.

Many years afterwards, a dear, white-haired old lady came to Stratford on a visit. Alderman Colbourne, who knows everybody in the town, ran across her one day in company with a mutual friend. " ' Surely I know you ? ' " said the lady; " ' But I can't remember your name.' " " I knew *her*," said the Alderman, with a twinkle in his eye, " but determined to have a joke with her, and said in my turn : ' Dear me, madam ! Surely *I* know *you ?*—but I can't remember your name.'

Then *her* eyes began to twinkle, and archly shaking a forefinger at me, she laughed and said : ' Mrs. Compton, at your service, dear Mr. Colbourne ! ' It was rare fun, and excellent fooling, and we both heartily enjoyed it. We recalled the old days of the ' tour,' and lived it all over again. It was most delightful."

A very curious recollection of Forster was communicated to me during the progress of this work by my friend Mr. Brassington, who, I may here record, was instrumental in " paving the way " for my " Stratford-Forster " investigations.

Mr. Brassington, as a lad of fourteen or fifteen, attended the Edgbaston Grammar School. He and a school chum daily had their dinners in the coffee-room of the local Hotel, or Inn, the *Plough and Harrow*, then kept by a Mr. and Mrs. Milward, of whom my friend has, he assures me, the most pleasant memories. Some time in 1874—a couple of years before Forster's death—the boy, who on that day chanced to be alone, noticed a party of three, a lady and two gentlemen, at dinner at another table. The one of the trio who more particularly attracted young Brassington's attention was the taller of the two gentlemen, who, in a loud voice, and with peculiarly insistent manner, appeared to completely monopolise the conversation. His male companion was a very stout gentleman, with a big head, his shock of unkempt hair, and his old-fashioned side-whiskers, being of snowy whiteness. The lady was evidently, the boy concluded, the second gentleman's daughter. Now there was a certain waitress at the inn whose ordinary

sphere of duty was in the coffee-room, a special branch of it being the looking after the gastronomical welfare of our two grammar-school boys. The "given," or Christian name, of this damsel was the very favourite Victorian one of "Fanny." The girl being tall and lanky, the youngsters, in consequence, nicknamed her "Lamp Post." It seems that on this day the exchange of pleasantries between "neat-handed Phyllis" and her schoolboy protégé, caused the tall, talkative gentleman at the other table to turn his eyes in their direction. Solemnly amused, he condescended, in his super-dignified, pompously-impressive way, to talk to the lad, leading him on to tell of his scholastic experiences, his progress in his studies, and so on. Mr. Brassington says that there was something decidedly awe-inspiring about his querist, which made his replies somewhat halting and incoherent. The London guests gone, "Lamp Post" informed the boy that his tall, dictatorial acquaintance was a "Mr. John Forster, the friend, she believed, of 'Mr. Pickwick and Oliver Twist,' the other gentleman, a *Knighthood*, was Sir Henry Cole, the lady being his daughter."

Some one had told her, it seems, that the latter old gentleman had a "big shop near 'igh Park, in London, where he sold pictures, and all sorts of old and dusty rubbish." Eheu !—*what* a synonym for South Kensington's pride and glory, the Victoria and Albert Museum, in all the beauty and richness of its new architectural suit of clothes ! Certainly it *was* in '74 a rather "dusty," "fusty" place, but to misname it, even in ignorance,



FACSIMILE OF A PAGE FROM THE VISITORS' BOOK AT ANN HATHAWAY'S COTTAGE, APRIL 21, 1852

something akin to a Wardour Street curio dealer's, is almost too funny for belief, if the story were not vouched for by a gentleman whose veracity is beyond question. But *she* didn't know! she only thought "as it wasn't much of a okapation for a *Knighthood!*" One can imagine Forster's almost judicial questioning of the boy, with a final dismissal of the "Go-on-as-you-are-going,-and-as-I-have-advised-you,-and-some-day-you'll-be-a-great-man-like-me," sort.

The story loses a great deal in cold print, but, as told by Mr. Brassington, is funny beyond measure, and, what is more, singularly convincing. My friend adds that Miss Cole, whom he subsequently learnt had something to do with a South Kensington School of Cookery—affiliated I suppose to the now extinct Department of Art and Science—was enthusiastic on culinary matters, her chief topic of conversation at dinner being new and original cookery "recipes."

Before closing this chapter on the direct and indirect connection of Forster with Stratford-on-Avon, I may mention an interesting discovery of Mr. Brassington's, among the MS. letters and other documents in the Library under his charge, in the Shakespeare Memorial Building, and which he has been good enough to place at my disposal for inclusion in this book. The discovery consists of two hitherto unpublished letters of Charles Dickens to Mr. Wilmott, sometime stage-manager at Drury Lane and the Lyceum Theatres, and a personal friend; they both make mention of Forster, and have as their subject-matter, the dramatic performances in

aid of the Guild of Literature and Art. I have been only too pleased to insert them, letting them tell their own tale—

"Devonshire Terrace,
"York Gate,
"Regent's Park,
"*7th August*, 1845.

"MY DEAR WILMOTT,

"Mayhap you may have heard how that some friends of yours are going to have a private play at Miss Kelly's Theatre—how that Clarkson Stanfield Esquire is not innocent of the fact—how that John Forster Esquire has been spoken of for Kitely—and how that Charles Dickens Esquire is connected—in whispers—with Bobadil.

"It will not come off until the 15th of next month, but I and some others want our dresses made at once, in order that we may be easy in them, as well as in the words. It has occurred to me that nobody can tell us so well as you where we can get them well, and not ruinously made. If you will take a chop with us either Saturday or Tuesday, you shall have it at your own house. What do you say to Saturday?

"You shall be producible behind that fat silver watch you used to hang up in your box at Drury Lane, at any moment you choose,

"Faithfully yours,
"CHARLES DICKENS."

The above letter is curious, if considered in connection with the previously quoted note by Mr. Purland as to the costumes being "awfully bad."

The next letter relates to rehearsals (in which evidently Wilmott was, in some way, interested), and to the proposed itinerary of the "players."

"Broadstairs,
"Kent,
"*6th February*, 1847.

"MY DEAR WILMOTT,

"Not having your address, I wrote to Mr. Forster yesterday, begging him to write to you, and to say, that I had sent round the first rehearsal call for *Every Man in His Humour*, for Saturday the 17th, at Miss Kelly's at half-past six exactly—also that I had summoned the whole company to some rehearsal or other at the same time and place, all through the then ensuing week.

"We shall act at Liverpool and at Manchester on the 26th and 27th. I have no doubt we shall have great houses, and a pleasant expedition.

"Faithfully yours,
"CHARLES DICKENS."

I have only to add, with regard to the above letters, that they are from a collection of MS. presented to the Shakespeare Memorial Library by Mrs. Victor Maslin, by whose kind favour, through Mr. Brassington, I am enabled to use them here. Mrs. Maslin, *née* Miss Ellis, is the daughter of the late Marquis de Crusal, or de Courcel, an *émigré* member of the old French *noblesse*, who, becoming naturalised, was for many years a notable personality with Queen Victoria, her late Majesty's great confidence in his taste and skill, making her to

place under his supervision most of the State functions occurring during a large period of her reign. Mrs. Maslin must have in great measure inherited her father's artistic gifts, her numerous benefactions to the Memorial Library being fair evidence of this.

Chapter VIII: *Bulwer, His Friend—and Another*

IT is not, perhaps, a matter of common knowledge, that, although the author of *Rienzi* and *The Lady of Lyons*, and John Forster were, in every sense of the word, friends—the closest and, indeed, most intimate of friends—it was Bulwer Lytton's son Robert, the poet, diplomatist, and the first earl, the "Owen Meredith" of Victorian literary history, who really had Forster's heart, the bond between the two being of an exceptionally affectionate character. I had this from the present Lord Lytton himself, who added, that the mutual relations between his father and Forster were more those of father and son than of two ordinary friends, howsoever dear to one another.

Forster was but twenty years old when he first made the acquaintance of Bulwer Lytton, that is, in the year 1832. The latter was then editor of the *New Monthly Magazine*, and in the previous year had published *Eugene Aram*, the book being not only a success, but creating something in the way of a sensation. The matter which originally brought them together was their common efforts to relieve the pecuniary embarrassments of Leigh Hunt, their first letters dealing chiefly with this matter.

There is a letter from Forster to Bulwer, written from Burton Street, to which he had just removed from Pentonville, and dated January the 4th, 1833, which makes clear what was being done at this time to place the affairs of Leigh Hunt in, at any rate a temporarily better position. After an allusion to another matter, Forster goes on to say: "I send you another prospectus regarding Leigh Hunt. Southey objected to the last. I have altered it, therefore, to its present form, at his suggestion in order that we may bring Hunt's claims still more strictly within the 'sacred territory' of the world of letters, which ought ever to be considered and respected as neutral ground.

"Wordsworth sent his illustrious name in a very amiable way, and Rogers has behaved in the right poetical spirit. Lord Holland gives us his countenance also, and you will perceive the use I have made of your name. . . . Would you speak to Macaulay, or Shiel, or Praed, or any other of your literary friends? A few House of Commons men of letters will be of infinite service. A line from you on this point I should esteem a great favour, for if you have the slightest objection to this, I shall myself apply to the persons I have mentioned.

"I say all this (at the risk of troubling you), in consequence of the very kind interest you have expressed in the matter."

This is interesting, but more particularly so as at this time, when special sympathy is being evoked on behalf of Leigh Hunt's daughter (widow of Charles Smith Cheltnam, dramatist, wood-engraver and general

man of letters), who, to ill-health adds traditional ill-fortune. A strong and earnest appeal is, I believe, being made, with a view to rendering the old lady's last days, if possible, free from the carking care which for many years past has beclouded her life. The shadow of Leigh Hunt's chequered existence has thus, as it would seem, settled down fifty years and more after his death in 1859, upon his only surviving daughter. But it is useless to shut our eyes to the unpleasant fact, that the whole-hearted clannishness, so common forty or fifty years ago even, is nowadays not to be seen, or very rarely. In every profession, in literature, perhaps, more than in any other, it is "Every one for him or herself, and God for us all."

The gospel of "Number One" is the dominating religion of the age. Alas! the pity of it, but "pity 'tis 'tis true."

Reverting again to this same letter of Forster's.

The concluding portion of it is a friendly criticism of *Eugene Aram*, and as coming from a mere youth of twenty-one, is certainly conclusive proof that Forster, even at that early age, had the "root of the matter" in him. The criticism is too long to quote in full, but I subjoin the salient points of it. Says Forster: "I have read *Eugene Aram* with very great and greedy pleasure. Your view of his character is very original, and . . . amazingly striking. . . . There is no lurching from it to the right or left. . . . Herein, I think, consists the beauty of the book. . . . I could have wished that you had adhered a little more strictly to the small information we have of Eugene Aram, because I think the

cause which he himself is reported to have assigned for the murder, namely that of jealousy of Clarke with his wife, is more likely to have urged him to the deed than mere gain, though I confess you put the last motive in a singularly novel way, and manage to make even it reputable. . . . Houseman's character is, I think, magnificently brought out all through, the way in which you bring about his betrayal of a knowledge of the resting-place of Clarke's bones is uncommonly fine. . . . Believe that I say this because I really *felt* your book. . . . Ever and most truly yours, JOHN FORSTER."

By 1834 Bulwer and Forster had become close and intimate friends, and from that year until Bulwer Lytton's death in 1873, their intimacy was never interrupted. This appears to have been so with all John Forster's friendships (that with Robert Browning being a notable exception), once made, continued, in the same spirit, until the death of one or the other dissolved the bond.

Throughout his life John Forster was Bulwer Lytton's closest and dearest friend. From this friend the latter received all the affection, encouragement, and practical assistance which one man can give to another. Forster helped him greatly in all his negotiations with his various publishers, corrected his proofs, advised him in matters literary and political, and gave him the greatest comfort and sympathy in all his private difficulties and afflictions. It is a curious coincidence that Forster's services to his equally dear friend Dickens, long years afterwards, were almost precisely of a similar character.

They (Bulwer Lytton and Forster) were associated

together in journalistic work, and down to the year 1845, their political sympathies were altogether and completely in harmony. The only serious strain upon their friendship occurred in 1850, when Bulwer Lytton, who had always been opposed to the repeal of the Corn Laws, separated himself from the Whigs, and ranged himself definitely on the side of the Conservatives—Unionists, as we say to-day. Fortunately, however, their mutual affection was too deep and genuine for this political difference to cause any permanent estrangement, and though they continued to differ in politics, Forster was always generous enough to express his admiration for his friend's political writings and speeches, even when he did not agree with his arguments.

From 1836 to 1840 Bulwer Lytton was chiefly engaged in writing for the stage, and his correspondence with Forster during these years is almost entirely occupied with matters relating to the composition and production of *La Vallière*, *The Lady of Lyons*, *Richelieu*, *The Sea Captain*, and *Money*. Forster assisted in all the negotiations with Macready, was present at most of the rehearsals, and welcomed more heartily than any one the successes which these plays achieved. In 1851, the year of the first great Exhibition, he was closely associated with Dickens and Bulwer Lytton in their joint efforts to found the Guild of Literature and Art, and himself took part in the theatricals which were organised to raise funds for this object. As did Dickens in after days, Bulwer Lytton sought Forster's advice and assistance in matters connected with his son's education, and when that son grew to man's estate, Forster became

to him an even more devoted and helpful friend than he had been to the father. Not that he was less a friend to Bulwer, because of his greater affection for Robert Lytton.

It would seem, that his friendship for the latter was in the nature of being more protective. There was, indeed, something of this spirit of protection in all Forster's friendships; and I have come to think, that therein lies the secret of his influence; men—aye! and not a few women—submitted themselves—in the parental sense almost—to his guidance and good offices, as to the wisest of wise fathers. With this result, that, during all these years, there was not a subject which affected the interests, nor an incident which concerned the lives of these two men, John Forster and Robert Lytton, which does not find some mention in their correspondence. The daughter of "Owen Meredith" has paid a filially beautiful tribute to her father's memory, in *The Life, Letters, and Literary Remains of Robert, Earl of Lytton*, by Lady Betty Balfour, and in which the exceptional relations between the Earl and John Forster are fully considered.

At one time Forster had it in mind to write a book about *Queen Anne and Her Times;* had, in fact, engaged to do it for Bentley, but—no unusual thing, in those days, in the publishing world—having quarrelled with that somewhat exacting gentleman, he refused to sign the agreement, then in his possession with Bentley's signature. All this he relates to Bulwer Lytton, in a letter from 58 Lincoln's Inn Fields, and dated Monday, the 3rd of February, 1840.

"My dear Bulwer,

"I am going to trouble you with a very bold request. . . . You recollect the proposed book about Queen Anne. . . . I refused to sign the agreement . . . and, too glad to get rid of all connection with *the rascal*, returned him the money he had advanced to induce me to go on with it. . . . I venture to ask you whether you would object to write such of those more strictly political portions . . . scenes in the Commons and the Lords, and the Closet of the Queen ? Whether, in fact, you would take in hand the Bolingbrokes and Oxfords, the Marlboroughs, Godolphins, and Somersets, the Shaftesburys, Whartons, and Sunderlands, Anne herself and her husband, Masham, Sarah Marlborough and the Lords, Sacheverel and his mobs ? . . . I would take myself the more literary portions, the Swifts and Popes, Defoes and Steeles, Pryors and Gays, the Vanbrughs, Congreves, Knellers, Booths and Bettertons. I do not propose that *my own name should at all appear in the first edition*, though the separate hands in the work might be marked as seemed best to you,

"Always most faithfully yours,

"John Forster."

As the matter of the projected book was discussed between the two friends in an interview, it is impossible to conjecture what was the outcome of the letter. One thing, however, is quite certain, the suggested collaboration never took place.

In 1847 *Rienzi* was published. Forster evidently

assisted in the revision of the proofs of that wonderful romance, for he writes: "I enclose you 3rd and 4th sheets of *Rienzi* as printed off. I shall be delighted to take any part in the revision of the proofs that you may now or hereafter assign to me." In this year, too, Mrs. Warner, the celebrated tragic actress, and mother of the late Mr. Charles Warner, expressed a strong desire to negotiate for *The Lady of Lyons*, and *Money*. This also we have on the authority of a letter from Forster to Bulwer Lytton, about this time. It seems, too, that it was in contemplation to entrust Phelps, then engaged in his great enterprise at Sadler's Wells, to popularise Shakespeare, and the higher "legitimate" generally, with a Bulwer Lytton play, either a re-arranged *Œdipus*, or the three-act Tragedy of *Brutus*. I rather imagine that the business, for some reason or other, fell through. In all these negotiations and arrangements, Forster acted as Bulwer Lytton's agent and representative, to the great advantage and benefit, as he himself confesses, of the latter.

At this time Forster was a staff-member of the *Examiner*, doing the literary and dramatic criticisms, and assisting Fonblanque the editor, and proprietor of the paper. Anthony Fonblanque, a clever man, in a journalistic, but not, I fancy, in a business sense, was, it appears, at this time in some sort of "money strait and difficulty," the genesis of which was indebtedness "arising out of the original purchase of the paper."

Matters were in this state with him, when, in 1847, he, through the influence of certain friends in official

circles, obtained the appointment of Chief of the Statistical Department of the Board of Trade. The rest may be better told in Forster's own words. In a letter to Bulwer Lytton, dated the 27th of October 1847, he says: "And now of my own concerns. You would probably see the announcement of F.'s appointment. This is the last week of his editorship of the *Exr.* I will speak to you very freely and unreservedly (in confidence, I need not say) of the arrangements he has proposed, and to which I have conditionally consented. In these circumstances"—already adverted to—"he can only for the present afford to give me a small pittance (comparatively speaking) for the editorship. But within a certain time I am to have either a percentage on profits, or an absolute share, and meanwhile we are bound to the present arrangement only as long as I find I can work in it. I am to have the sole editorship . . . and to receive £500 a year. He is himself, for the present, to continue to write something every week. . . . I am venturing to entertain the hope that I may have some assistance from you! Something from week to week, however brief." That Forster himself had a fairly clear notion of effecting the purchase of the property, is evident from the concluding passage of this same letter. "Of the ultimate destination of the paper," he says, "(beyond my share in it) we have not spoken, but in times of less money pressure I should have had no difficulty, with the help of friends, in effecting a purchase of the entire property, on terms that, after a year or two, supposing all to go well, would lie very lightly indeed. *Nor do I yet despair of this. All*

my efforts shall be directed towards it." I am indebted to Lord Lytton for the suggestion, that I should quote so much of the above letter from Forster to his grandfather, as would—it is believed for the first time—give the true story of the former's accession to the editorial chair of the *Examiner*.

When, in 1856, Forster decided to drop the curtain on his bachelorhood, and raise it again on the play matrimonial, his second announcement of the contemplated change in his condition was made to Bulwer Lytton in a letter dated the 28th of September of that year. The first apprisal of the news was, of course, to Dickens, but it was, if I do not misunderstand the latter's note to his wife on the subject, a personal communication. Forster's letter to Bulwer Lytton, is, as one might expect it would be, dignified, almost solemn. Forster took life, and most things connected with it, seriously, and without doubt, he regarded this revolutionary step in his career in anything but a frivolous or mirth-provoking light. I am fortunate, through the courtesy of Lord Lytton, in being able to give this letter of Forster's to his friend in its entirety, and more fortunate still, Bulwer Lytton's reply. I venture to think, that, apart from their main subject-matter, the letters are especially interesting, as incontestably proving the wonderful strength and warmth of these two men's friendly affection. I do not think that any one, reading these two letters, could come to any other conclusion, than that the friendship of Bulwer Lytton and John Forster was true and beautiful, and, in a way, unique. Forster's affection for Bulwer's son

Robert was even greater in its strength and tenderness than it was for the father.

Forster's letter is as follows—

58 Lincoln's Inn Fields,
28th September, 1856.

"*Private.*

"My dear Bulwer Lytton,

"Great blanks occur in our intercourse, incident, I suppose, to all human intercourse; but I do not find these avail to relax the hold which the past and all its memories and associations have upon us.

"I am going to enter upon a great change of life, and cannot bear that you should hear it authoritatively from any but myself. Gossip I dare say you have heard already, for my private affairs seem to have been much talked of lately, and people have known far more than myself about them. I say this only for the purpose of adding, that if I had thought it right and becoming to tell of such things myself, I should not have been so long before I spoke of them to you.

"I am about to marry Mrs. Colburn. You have seen her, I think, and if I were to say to you how amiable, gentle and accomplished she is, you would of course expect me to say no less. With that, therefore, I leave it, only, perhaps, I may add, that, as she is more than seven years younger than myself, there is no improper disparity in point of age.

"Anything further I spare you, till I find that you care to hear more as to my future and intentions. I shall leave town for an absence of a month or more

—a rare holiday for me! I have taken a house in Montague Square (No. 46), and (upon my return) poor old Lincoln's Inn Fields, where I have lived for three-and-twenty years, will hereafter know me not! . . . I hope that all has been well with you. Even when I do not see, or hear of you, you are not—can never be—wholly absent. As I look back along the past, there is no figure I see surrounded with so much that has made it pleasant to me, and dignified it with worthy recollections, as your own.

"And with all those old warm feelings of grateful friendship, I am, and must be,

"Ever yours,

"JOHN FORSTER."

"MY DEAR FORSTER,

"I heard of your proposed marriage long since, upon what seemed good authority. But I did not write to congratulate you, for I presumed, that if you desired congratulations, you would make the announcement to me yourself, and you know too well my brotherly affection for you to doubt my sincere interest in your happiness. I have at present but a slight acquaintance with Mrs. Colburn, but the little I do know confirms all you say of her, and assures me of the wisdom of your choice. I not only wish you happiness from my heart, but, I believe, with my reason, that it will be secured, perhaps more so than if you had married at an earlier age.

"I am going abroad, D.V., soon for the winter, but



JOHN FORSTER'S HOUSE, PALACE GATE, KENSINGTON

From a photograph taken at the time of his residence there

I hope we shall cement our friendship by a closer union between Park Lane and Montague Square on my return.

"Adieu, my old and dear friend. Health, calm felicity, and long life to you and yours,

"E. B. L.

"Knebworth,
"*Monday.*"

The "long life" that Bulwer Lytton wished for his friend, lasted just twenty years, he himself preceding Forster to the grave by three years. But there was much to happen in the interval, although Forster in his letter, to which the above is the reply, foreshadows the increasing fitfulness of their future intercourse.

After all, it was an easy prophecy, for so well read a student of the "human" as John Forster would not fail to know, that the very closest of friendships tends, as the years go on, to a loosening of the more intimate ties. Other, and more pressing interests, as they arise, crowd out the old, the dear old ways, and, although the hearts may be as warm, and the mutual regard as keenly tender as ever they were in the past, the opportunities for communion and expression daily and hourly become fewer and fewer, until there is nothing left but the memory of the "has been," tempered, however, with the fragrance of the immortal "IS."

How big the heart of Bulwer Lytton was may be gathered from some words of Dickens in a letter to Forster, who quotes them in the *Life*. "Bulwer Lytton's conduct," he says, referring to some sad news

about a common friend, "is that of a generous and noble-minded man, as I have ever thought him."

Forster himself says of him: "There never was a more varied genius, a more gallant spirit, a man more constant to his friends, more true to any cause he represented, or one whose name will hereafter be found entitled to a more honoured place in the history of his time." He never minded time and trouble in the service of a friend or a good cause. Witness the writing of a comedy (no light undertaking in the midst of a busy literary life), and of an address to be spoken by Dickens; both, and much more, in the interests of the "Guild," for the object of which he was enthusiastically in favour. Did he not give a freehold piece of land on his estate for the erection of the projected "Retreat"? and did he not also, in the most princely way, give up the great Hall at Knebworth to the production, for the purposes of the "Guild" Fund, of Ben Jonson's *Every Man in His Humour*, himself bearing all charges? But for Bulwer Lytton there would have been no Guild, and there was no one, not even Dickens, who more lamented the failure of the scheme. I am inclined to think that it was Bulwer Lytton's enthusiasm for Dickens's pet hobby, that made the great novelist to admire, and even love him as he really did. There was no more honoured guest at Gadshill, where, with Longfellow, the Emerson Tennents, and other English and American notabilities, he was a frequent visitor.

Like Forster, he occasionally gave Dickens good advice; but not always, as when, on the mooting of the

latter's Australian visit, he was all for the venture, in direct opposition to Forster's strongly expressed opinion to the contrary. The offer, as every one knows, was ultimately declined as impracticable, mainly on the score of Dickens's health. Had he lived, there is no knowing what might have eventuated in this direction. It is an old story now, Bulwer Lytton's suggestion that Dickens, in *Great Expectations*, should make Pip marry. "Don't leave him a lonely man!" In thus advising Pip's creator, Lytton was speaking out of the fullness of his own heart and experience. He, like many another man of genius, was—or I greatly mistake me—a very lonely man. We know now, that Dickens, also to a great extent, lived the life of a "solitary."

Those outside the "charmed circle," can never, somehow, understand this. "He laughs, and talks, and enjoys himself," say they, "it's all nonsense about his being lonely—lonely—tcha!" True, but does not Shakespeare say: "A man may smile—and smile—and be a villain." Logically, may not a man laugh, and talk, and enjoy himself, and be—a hermit?

There are two allusions in a letter of Bulwer Lytton's to Forster, under date, April 15th, 1860, which are, as I think, interesting, as expressive of the former's opinions with regard to a historical, and to a literary matter. Lytton is giving Forster a friendly criticism of *The Five Members*, then just published. After an expression of unqualified praise of the work generally, he says of Lady Carlisle, that shamless Lais: "I do not think an intrigue less likely because of her age.

"Leaders of *forty* are more under the influence of Venus than at any age, and I firmly believe that she was false and licentious, but that she may also have had a keen and bitter resentment against Charles (First) is probable enough."

This is a good example of Bulwer Lytton's shrewd knowledge of human nature, as it was in the period to which he is referring, for it is a great mistake to suppose that humanity does not change with the centuries. It does change, and, unfortunately not, in every case, for the better.

The other matter upon which he has something to say in this same letter is George Eliot's *Mill on the Floss*. He writes: "I have just got through *Mill on the Floss*—very good; some admirable touches of human nature and character, showing humour, etc., *great want, however*, of fine and delicate moral perception, so that the characters do not do what is fitting."

As a hitherto unpublished piece of criticism on so notable a literary personality as George Eliot, by such a man as Bulwer Lytton, the extract is undoubtedly of more than ordinary interest.

The sequence of events that mark the career of this truly versatile genius and remarkable man, now bring us to that memorable day in his life—the most memorable of all really; for that which signalised it, set the seal, as it were, upon all that had gone before—honours, dignities, social distinction, material rewards, and an assured place in literature—that brought to him his Sovereign's invitation to take his place among the Barons of England, of whose old-time representatives he had written so well,

in the truest spirit of knightly chivalry and romance. This is what Forster writes, in reply to a letter from him announcing the news—

"19 Whitehall Place,
"*5th July*, 1866.

"MY DEAR BULWER LYTTON,

"It is impossible to say with what pleasure I receive your letter, and the news it gives me. No fortune affecting myself, I can truly say, ever moved me so deeply. Because I know that you have nobly won and earned it.

"I only pray now, that health and quiet may be yours for many, many happy years, to wear this dignity into veritable and downright *old age*, and with every passing year to show how worthily such honours are bestowed, when they reward not services to party only, but a life of labour and endeavour, by which men of all parties have been made better and happier, a life of generous service to literature, which other times will probably appreciate even better than your own.

"Always, my dear B. L.,
"Yours most affectionately,
"JOHN FORSTER."

The first Baron Lytton lived to enjoy his honours exactly six years. His was not to see "veritable and downright" *old age*, for, never of a robust physique, this latter period was really a gentle declining towards the end. His best work had been done, the spirit and energy for further accomplishment being now sadly absent.

Lytton had some peculiar ideas with regard to men

and things. Take education, for instance. He was perfectly convinced that a public school training was, for many reasons, a disadvantage to a boy. His contention amounted briefly to this, that public school life, with its so-called "licking-into-shape" methods, at the hands rather of the "educatee" (?) than of the "educator," was calculated to deaden in a lad the finer sensibilities, and render him, in the end, either a mere bullying animal, or, its opposite, a fossilised invertebrate. It has been seen how Lytton consulted Forster with reference to his son Robert's education, so that it is just possible his faith in his own ideas was not sufficiently strong to enable him to rely entirely upon his own judgment in the matter of his boy's educative future.

It is not my intention to say very much—in fact, the briefest word only—concerning the ideal friendship between Robert, Earl of Lytton, and John Forster.

I am tempted here to show how beautiful was the affection of Forster for Robert Lytton, by a quotation from Prof. Henry Morley.

"Lord Lytton, to whom had been carried on from early years the love borne to his father, when dedicating to John Forster, in 1859, his volume called *The Wanderer*, spoke for more hearts than his own, when he told what he had found in this generous friend of his youth—

> "For all youth seeks, all manhood needs,
> All youth and manhood rarely find;
> A strength more strong than codes or creeds,
> In lofty thoughts and lovely deeds
> Revealed to heart and mind;

"A staff to stay, a star to guide,
A spell to soothe, a power to raise,
A faith by fortune firmly tried,
A judgement resolute to preside
O'er days at strife with days.

"O large in love, in nature sound!
O man to me, of all men, dear!
All these in thine my life hath found,
And force to tread the rugged ground
Of daily toil with cheer."

Robert Lytton achieved great things, one, it may be said, the very greatest to which a subject may aspire.

To attain the Vice-Regal sceptre of our Indian Empire, to grasp, practically, sovereign power over three hundred millions of native souls, and this while comparatively young in years, is, unless I am very much mistaken, in the way of being a notable record.

Also, it so happened, that Lord Lytton's Vice-Royalty (1876–1880) was made memorable by three events: two of which, the one disastrous, the other glorious, stand out, clear-cut as silhouettes against the hot, deep blue of an Eastern sky; the terrible famine in Southern India, and Queen Victoria's proclamation and assumption of the title of Empress of India in 1877. The third happening, the Second Afghan War, had far-reaching results, which are only now materialising, in the rapid declension of Afghanistan as an independent native state. The Amir's power, at one time (not so very long ago), to all intents and purposes, illimitable, cruel, pitiless, is now weakening throughout the whole of its borders; and that which, within the memory of many of us, was a dangerous and ever-present menace, is fast

crumbling into the decadent dust of retributive ruin. Never let it be forgotten, that to Robert, 1st Earl of Lytton, is the honour and credit due to-day for whatever benefit has accrued to Great Britain in connection with this matter. That it should have been his lot to "hold the cards," political and diplomatic, what time his Sovereign assumed the Imperial purple, was one of those happy coincidences, for which ordinarily there is no accounting, but which in this case might reasonably have been foreseen.

Lord Beaconsfield could be, and generally was secret in all his political dealings, but it is not to be supposed for a moment, that the Prime Minister would let Lord Lytton leave England for Calcutta only a few months (not quite twelve) before the dramatic surprise was sprung upon the people of this country, without at least giving him a hint as to his intentions. I even go so far as to suggest, that Lord Beaconsfield expressly selected Lord Lytton for the high office of Viceroy at this particular time, knowing full well that his temperament, and genius for the poetically picturesque, added to his brilliant diplomatic gifts, eminently fitted him to represent the majesty of England at a function, than which, none more important to the Empire, or more significant in the eyes of those hundreds of millions of Easterns, whose interests, for good or for ill, are now bound up with our own, has ever been held in that wonderful and still mysterious Dominion of ours Beyond the Seas. If only Forster could but have lived to see this more than realisation of all his hopes and ambitions for the "son of his heart"! But he had been several

months in his grave when Robert Lytton, the Queen's Vice-King, set his foot upon Indian soil. How it would have rejoiced his heart.

Having no children of his own, he seems to have given to the son of his old friend all the natural affection of which he was capable, and to have seen that son in the day of his triumph, would have been reward sufficient for him, for all his own devotion and steadfast helpfulness. He would, indeed, have been more than satisfied. How Lord Lytton planned and worked to cope with the devastating famine in the Southern Provinces; and how he ultimately succeeded in his desperate fight with hunger, disease, and death need not be told here; it is matter of history, and as such, renders recapitulation unnecessary. It is enough that in this, and in all else that he did, or that came to him, he played a good man's part, leaving behind him a heritage and a name, of which his descendants may well be, as, indeed, they are, justly proud, adding to all this—as not his least claim to be remembered—that he was Forster's friend, and that Forster loved him.

As the name of Leigh Hunt has already been mentioned in the earlier portion of this chapter, in connection with the movement initiated by Bulwer Lytton and Forster, for the financial relief of the unfortunate essayist, it may be as well, perhaps, to say in this place the little more there is that can be said about him.

Leigh Hunt was one of those curious instances of a notable literary linking-up of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Born in 1784—during the earlier part

of the reign of George the Third—he lived until Queen Victoria had been upon the throne two-and-twenty years. He must have witnessed the passing away of the "old," and the birth, and vigorous growth of the "new," in all things. In the course of his life he came to know everybody worth knowing, not only in the world of literature, but in the neighbouring *planets*. It is only, however, with his friendship with Forster that I am concerned here, for which, as, indeed, in the case of almost everything concerning him, the material is of the scantiest.

It is practically certain that Forster's acquaintance with him originated in a mutual knowledge of Henry Colburn, the publisher and the first husband of Mrs. Forster. Colburn's house in Bryanston Square was the great meeting-place for all the literary, and in a limited sense, the artistic notabilities of the day. Here, at the frequent receptions, Sam Lover, the author of *Handy Andy*, and the writer and composer of Irish ballads, many of which live still, delighted those present with his inimitable singing of his own songs (to his own accompaniment) though he had no voice worth the mentioning. Here, too, came Leigh Hunt, W. J. Fox, Dickens, Macready, Douglas Jerrold, Forster, and many more clever people, already celebrated, or promising to be. Here, too, might be seen Belzoni, the Egyptian explorer and strong man, whose "show," like that of poor Haydon the painter, failed to attract, while "General" Tom Thumb, the American dwarf, and Barnum's other "wonder," the "Mermaid *v.* Manatee monster," drew such enormous "houses," that sightseers even fought



SIR E. BULWER LYTTON
From an engraving



LEIGH HUNT
From a drawing by J. Hayter

for admission to the dingy little exhibition hall, where they were on view. Originally Hunt lived in Chelsea, near the Carlyles, but removed in 1853 to what is now Rowan Road—then Cornwall Road, Hammersmith, and there he died. It was thought at one time that he would be selected to succeed Southey in the laureateship, but although influential efforts were made on his behalf, he was passed over, and Wordsworth nominated to the position. I am not so sure that it would have been an ideal appointment, first because Hunt would have found it difficult to write to "order," and secondly, by reason of his well-known advanced political opinions, which in these days would rank as "mildly" liberal, but which in the "'thirties" and "'forties" were regarded as being almost semi-revolutionary. There is very little in the shape of original autographic correspondence, or other documentary MS. of Leigh Hunt's extant. At South Kensington there is only one letter to Forster, on a comparatively unimportant matter, with the date, October the 25th—the year omitted.

It is a scathing criticism of a certain book, then just out, title and author not stated. Leigh Hunt was rather good at this sort of thing, and thoroughly enjoyed the "cutting-up" process in reviewing.

There is also, in the Forster MSS. Collection, a curious document entirely in Hunt's handwriting. It is in the form of an undertaking to Colburn the publisher, to do certain literary work for an agreed price, which sum is to be paid *immediately* the MS. is delivered. The paper is dated January the 26th, 1829, and the amount agreed upon is, without doubt, very, very small. Poor Hunt's

resources were always in a state of "strain," hence his evident desire in this instance to get his remuneration as soon as possible after the completion of the work. Of the "ups and downs" of life, Hunt, it would seem, had more than his fair share of the "downs," but I fancy, it must be mainly attributed to his want of method, and to a disposition to regard everything from the "sunny" point of view, no matter what the cost, both to himself and to others. It was not that he was of a coldly calculating nature. Far from it. He was a man with the tenderest heart possible; a most lovable personality. Like Forster, he was magnetically attractive, though in a different way to his friend. Forster never was enthusiastic. He may perhaps, as we have seen he did in the rare case of some of his correspondence with Bulwer Lytton, have "let himself go"—but it was always within decorous limits.

It was just the natural man breaking through the crust of the *unnatural* superficial harshness which the less intelligent of those with whom he came in contact regarded, and firmly believed to be the real John Forster. With Hunt it was altogether different. He was ever "bubbling over" with "peace and goodwill" to all men. The "lightness" of his literary style, the delicacy, almost daintiness of its humour, was simply the reflex of his own light-hearted, optimistic nature. Whatever the "imaginative" man is, so is he in the work of his brain and hands. You may never dissociate the one from the other, for the literary man, who does not put himself into his work, is, I do not say, a human

impossibility, but an experience so rare, as to be met with only—like the flowering of a certain aloe—once in a hundred years. Hunt was only twenty-four when he spoke his mind so freely with regard to the "First Gentleman in Europe." He certainly had the courage of his opinions, a way of looking at his exploit which may not inaptly, I think, be paralleled with the wise proverb: "Discretion is the better part of valour." That Leigh Hunt possessed valour (journalistic courage, *i. e.*) no one may deny, but he was assuredly lacking in discretion. We in these days (at least I must confess myself to be of that way of thinking), are inclined to wonder not a little, what the fuss was all about. To be mulcted in a fine of £500, and to suffer the indignity and discomfort of two years' imprisonment (in spite of the amenities conceded by the Government of the day), seems a somewhat high price to pay for the doubtful privilege of calling the reigning Sovereign (*in esse* as *in posse*), a "corpulent Adonis of fifty." It all appears so ridiculous, that the really harmless utterance of a young journalistic fire-eater (in his own estimation), should have so fluttered the Carlton House dovecote, when the wisest course would undoubtedly have been, to have treated the silly indiscretion with dignified and royal contempt. By not doing so, and instead, by making a case of *lèse majesté* out of it, that which might easily have been soon forgotten, stuck to the object of it with the pertinacity of the proverbial burr to the day of his death. The serious part of it, however, was that at the very outset of his career Leigh Hunt handicapped himself financially so irretrievably that he never recovered his foothold.

The day that saw him step over the threshold of Horsemonger Lane Gaol, was the beginning of a life-long series of embarrassments and kindred misfortunes, which for the lack of a little discretion might never have been his lot.

Chapter IX: *Landor and Jerrold*

WITH many it will be a matter of wonderment why I should elect to bracket together the names of Walter Savage Landor and Douglas Jerrold in the heading of this chapter. Had the two men anything in common? Apparently, no; but really, and in many essentials, yes —or, at least, so I venture to think and believe. "Yes, but," it will be said, "Landor was a sour-minded, gloomy-souled philosopher, whilst Jerrold, a wit (if caustic), a humorist, the author of *Black-eyed Susan;* the chronicler of *Mrs. Caudle* was, if not exactly a laughing philosopher, the cause of much and hearty laughter in others." Very true; but there are always, or generally, two sides to a picture; so here. It is all really very simple. On the surface, Landor and Jerrold appear to be as dissimilar as it is possible for two men to be. Landor's *Imaginary Conversations* bear, apparently, no earthly likeness to *Mrs. Caudle* or *St. James and St. Giles;* to all appearance they are as unlike as *Clarissa* and *David Copperfield,* but just as Richardson and Dickens had one common aim and object, the painting of contemporary life as each saw it, so Landor and Jerrold, both of them, saw things about them which in their view needed amendment or

obliteration, and, each adopting his own method (Landor in his way, the undiluted philosophic, and Jerrold in his way, the caustically humorous), set out to tilt against the enemy. One goal; two separate roads, that is, as I take it, the true, and only secret of it.

There can be no manner of doubt, that Landor was one of John Forster's warmest friends, as he was of Dickens, who named one of his sons after him. As editor of the *Examiner*, Forster continually requisitioned Landor's services for the paper. The trenchant, "straight-to-the-point" style of the latter was not only well suited to the journal itself, but as Forster, with the true editorial instinct clearly saw, was as clearly acceptable to its readers.

Hallam, Lord Tennyson, in the *Life* of his famous father, has also shown how that the poet's friendship for Forster led to the first appearance in the *Examiner* of the "Charge of the Light Brigade." We have seen Bulwer Lytton doing the same thing; indeed, it may be said, that scarcely one of Forster's many literary friends but was, at some time or another, invited by him to contribute to Anthony Fonblanque's paper. It was a graceful way of paying a friendly compliment, and Forster availed himself to the full of the privilege of his position. To run through the files of the *Examiner*, as it has been my duty to do during the writing of this work, is to come into close touch with the minds of such literary giants as Carlyle, Leigh Hunt, Dickens, Thackeray, Shelley, Macaulay, and a goodly host of others who have done so much to keep the Lamp of English Literature burning brightly, in spite

of storm and stress and the ignorant indifference of the multitude.

If Leigh Hunt may be regarded as an interesting link with the eighteenth century, how much more is Landor, who, born in Warwick, January 30, 1775, when George the Third was King, was, as a lad, familiar with Johnson's and Goldsmith's England, was old enough at the outbreak of the French Revolution to realise its crimes, its horrors, and its subsequent and gradual merging into the "one man" despotism of the First Empire.

The proclamation of the United States as a free and independent republic he must have read in the news sheets of the day, as also the glorious victory off Cape Trafalgar, October the 21st, 1805, the decisive naval, as was Waterloo the final military blow to the power of Napoleon. Landor had the best possible educational advantages, passing in due course from Rugby to Oxford, where he gave more than a good account of himself. His first meeting with Forster was in the summer of 1836. His *Satire on Satirists* had just been published, the reading which had roused a great desire in Forster to become acquainted with the author. About this time, too, Landor expressed himself in very strong terms with regard to Wordsworth, who it was alleged had spoken in a disrespectful way of his brother-poet Southey. Forster did his best, as he generally did in such cases, to pour oil on the troubled waters, with, I believe, in the end complete success. Every one who has read Forster's Life of Landor, or that of Dickens, will be familiar with the story the biographer tells of the gruff old philosopher and "Little Nell," but as this book may fall, perchance,

into the hands of some one who has read neither, for the benefit of such I will just give the outline of it. Landor lived for some time in Bath—35 St. James's Square. Here, just before the *Old Curiosity Shop* was begun—whilst, indeed, it was in the throes of inception—Dickens and Forster, and, I think, Maclise—or possibly it might have been Cattermole—paid Landor a long-promised visit. During the stay of Landor's London friends, Dickens had his inspiration of "Little Nell." Such was the reverence of Landor for the house in which the one of all Dickens's creations he most loved was born, that he almost had it in his mind to purchase the place, and then burn it to the ground, to the end that no meaner association should ever desecrate the birthplace of Nell. After one of these ecstatic outbursts, he would pause a little, become conscious of his friend's sense of his absurdity, and break into a thundering peal of laughter. How like Landor this fantastic, irresponsible fooling, for fooling it was, although the man was serious enough—in a way—and would have been mortally offended had his sincerity been doubted for a moment. A strange being, and really understood only by one man—John Forster. That so undisciplined a nature as Landor's should be capable of showing affection for anything human is surprising; but the fact that he *did* love Forster, and that the latter *did* have a very warm regard for Landor, is beyond dispute. If there were no better proof of this than the two letters I am about to quote, it would be quite sufficient to set the matter at rest. To the first there is no date, while neither bear the address of the writer.

"My dear Forster,

"You often do me greatly more than justice, but on this occasion you may be assured I feel it only simple and strict justice when you believe me to be a partaker in your grief.[1] If your heart is so warm and affectionate to all your friends, what must it be now—and so dear a relative. Let me, if possible, take my mind, and yours too, from these painful thoughts. Three days ago, I received a letter from Dickens, o'erflowing with wit and kindness. While I was enjoying it, little did I imagine you were about to be immersed in grief. I have an antique ring which I want to put upon your finger. It has been newly got on purpose, and these are the lines I wrote for it—it is a *mask*—

> "Forster! though you never wore,
> Any kind of mask before,
> Yet, by holy friendship take
> This, and wear it for my sake.
>
> "Walter Landor."

The second letter was written at the close of the year before his death. So far as I can discover, it was the last ever penned to the old friend of happier days. As the letter in its entirety shows, there had been an unfortunate misunderstanding between them, the genesis of which is fairly plain from the general tenor of words used.

"14*th December*, 1863.

"My dear Forster,

"Well do I know the friendship you had for me, and have grieved over its interruption.

[1] The death of Forster's sister, Elizabeth.

"How often have I known you vindicate from unmerited aspersions, honest literary men! Unhappily, no friend has been found hitherto who takes any such interest in

"WALTER LANDOR."

On the first day of the May following he died. I do not find that the breach was healed; that any sort of reconciliation took place. The stormy spirit of Walter Savage Landor put out to sea, friendless and alone. When I say "friendless," I mean the hid faces of the greater friendships, of which Forster's was, or rather had been the greatest. I am in a position to be able to say that, in spite of the unhappy estrangement, Forster grieved much at the death of the old man—he was 89—the cloud between, as in the case of Browning, being now impossible of lifting. I do not say for a moment that Forster's conscience troubled him in either instance, the quarrel, or difference, being none of his seeking.

It was simply that his patience was tried beyond the limit. Landor was conscious of this, hence that pathetic last note of his to the man whose love and good-will were as the very essence of life to him. It was the last despairing wail of a soul torn with disappointment, and unavailing regret, that wrung from him that last sentence, short, but containing so much agony of mind, and cruel self-torture: "Unhappily, no friend has been found hitherto who takes any such interest in Walter Landor."

A cry of unutterable hopelessness! and one which even to see written down, is calculated to touch the



DOUGLAS JERROLD

From an engraving



WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

From an engraving of the painting by Sir Wm. Boxall, R.A.

hardest heart with the pity that knoweth not to blame.

The causticity of Jerrold's nature; the sullenness of his reserve; the ill-natured tone of much of his humour, were of a kind essentially different to the normal characteristics of Landor's strange, almost savage personality. And yet, as I suggested at the outset of this chapter, the disposition to regard human nature with the jaundiced eye of prejudice was the same with both men. They were both cursed with an ill-regulated temper (to a greater extent in the case of Landor), Jerrold's being of the bitter, biting variety, whilst Landor's was more akin to that of the savage primeval. Landor's unrestrained indulgence in his natural vice—for a vice it was—promoted in him a gloomy, soured attitude towards his fellow man, which ultimately left him to tread alone the last few life-miles of his long earth-journey. Peace be to his memory!—he was a great man.

Born in London, in 1803, Douglas William Jerrold, wit and humorist by reputation, playwright (in the strict sense of that really very expressive term), and journalist by occupation, but writer of serious fiction by inclination, was never one of the Forster "inner circle."

Even as there was something about him which did not quite appeal to the younger man, so Forster's coldly-critical, judicial mind, and outwardly harsh manner, had no attraction for Jerrold. For these, and many other kindred reasons, the two men could not be said to see eye to eye in everything. The "arbitrary cove"

and the "little wasp" (as a certain big "brother of the pen" dubbed Jerrold), had, as a matter of fact, nothing in common. Forster had in him all the essential elements of the true "Geordie," but, of course, largely refined and purged by self-culture and education, and by the process of sharpening-up on the "steel" of exceptional artistic social intercourse. His literary genius —for it was more than mere talent—contributed, too, to the "whittling away" of much of the Northumbrian "roughness," the natural result of his early surroundings and upbringing.

Cattle-breeding and its concomitants are not, as a rule, conducive to the nourishing of that gift, possessed, as his birthright, in such large measure by John Forster.

He set out to overcome all the disadvantages of birth, parentage and so on (for no one can or will deny that in the case of Forster they *were* disadvantages), and by sheer force of character, to which must be added his quite superficial harshness of manner, he not only won the day, but achieved a great and decisive victory. With Douglas Jerrold it was altogether different.

His early history was, in a sense, that of struggle, poverty, repression, and disappointment.

His father was a provincial actor and manager of the "Crummles" type, always, so to speak, on the "tramp"; always in financial straits, and never reaching that "Canaan" of the provincial manager, a "full house." An extract from a certain letter of Procter's (Barry Cornwall) to Forster on this very subject, may, not inaptly, I think, be quoted here, as illustrative of the elder Jerrold's professional position and experiences,

although Procter is, of course, in no wise referring to the father of the future author of *Black-eyed Susan*.

Says Proctor: "My dear Forster . . . if you wish to see the Drama in its palmy state, take a first-class ticket and come straight to York. I never go to the theatre in London, but when they told me here that there was nothing worth seeing, that there were no stars in York, it was a temptation not to be resisted, the more especially as it was the last night of the Company's acting, and the play was ordered ("bespoke" according to Dickens, in *Nicholas Nickleby*). After dinner I set off for the palace of old Tate Wilkinson. The play announced was *The Jealous Wife!* Mr. Oakley by Mr. Pritchard (the manager). Charles Oakley by Mr. Gomersal (?) (not the man who used to personate Napoleon at Astley's), Mrs. Oakley by Mrs. Waverley Scott (?) and so on. Between the play and the farce, there was a song by Mr. Corri. The Celebrated Double Jockey Hornpipe by Mr. Gomersal and Mr. Gourlay, (Charles Oakley and Sir Harry!) a dance by Miss Eates (Harriet), and by particular desire the song of "Zip Coon," by Mr. Gomersal. There was only one man who seemed to have a spark of the *vis comica* about him. He played a sort of old Irish servant, and was like—Thackeray!—in size, figure, etc. He obtained considerable applause from the four people in the boxes (of whom I was one—paying three shillings), and from the eleven people in the pit. Half-price quadrupled the number of the spectators.

"To Mr. Corri I listened with a languid ear. But when Messrs. Gourlay and Gomersal came forward for

the hornpipe, it was a treat indeed. They danced it with infinite vigour.

"The audience *would* have it again, and this time our friend Gomersal exerted himself so much, that in one of his pirouettes near the orchestra, he was unable to stop himself, and came head-foremost amongst the musicians.

"Gods!—never was heard such applause.

"They would not let little Eliza Gates (or was it the *Infant Phenomenon?*) do her dance. They would have G. and G. a *third* time, after which came Eliza—and then Gomersal's song (with a *kicking* accompaniment), which I must describe when I see you."

It all reads like a page from *Nickleby*, and as such I make no apology for the quotation. It was in this sort of atmosphere, then, that Jerrold toddled away his little life until his tenth year. His infant services were in frequent requisition on the stage of the Sheerness Theatre, which in 1807 the elder Jerrold leased and managed, with, I believe, the usual "Crummles'" luck. Little Douglas William played the "child" in *The Stranger*, that awfully gloomy drama of Kotzebue's, and doubtless many another rôle of a similar character. Then, in 1813, the scene was changed, so far as the boy was concerned.

Through the influence of some one in the Dockyard, Douglas received a naval nomination, and in due course was appointed to *H.M.S. Namur* as a midshipman. How wonderfully things are ordered in the case of men like Jerrold. But for his two years' man-o'-war experience, we should have had no *Black-eyed Susan*.

The frivolous-minded young person of the present day, to whom " musical comedy " is as the be-all and end-all of his or her amusement-loving existence, may not see great reason for regret in that fact, but the fact remains, that the most popular of all nautical dramas was played twice nightly, at Drury Lane, and the Old Surrey, for what was then a record run of 400 consecutive performances. *Black-eyed Susan*, and the name of T. P. (Tippy) Cooke as " William," will live in theatrical history, and in the memory of many a mere citizen, long after musical comedy is buried and forgotten.

There was another strange coincidence, too, in Jerrold's connection with the navy. On board the *Namur* was a certain fore-topmastman, one Clarkson Stanfield, with whom the young middy soon struck up a close friendship. The two got up theatrical entertainments, Jerrold looking after the " producing," and general stage management, and Stanfield contributing the scenery, etc. There is no documentary evidence to prove the statement, but I think it may be safely settled that, in the days to come, it was through the introduction of Clarkson Stanfield, R.A., that Jerrold became acquainted with Forster.

In 1824, when but twenty-one years of age, Jerrold the ex-middy, married. His last naval service in '15 was assisting in the conveyance of the wounded after Waterloo, from Ostend to England. He was very poor when he married, being the principal mainstay of his father and family. The elder Jerrold, after the Napoleonic war was over, found his occupation as manager of the Sheerness theatre gone. He returned

to London, and to a precarious existence as an actor. They lived (Douglas included) in Broad Court, Bow Street, now improved out of recognition. Jerrold at this time wrote much for the stage, being play-builder and repairer to Davidge of the Coburg Theatre, besides writing for the Press. Quarrelling with Davidge, who "haggled" over the purchase of *Black-eyed Susan*, Jerrold suddenly left him, took the drama to Elliston, of the old Surrey, who "put it on" immediately, with T. P. Cooke as William.

Jerrold only made £60, all told, out of the venture, but managerial profits ran well into five figures. Elliston appointed Jerrold his hack-dramatist-in-chief, at the princely salary of £5 per week. In 1835 he ceased writing for the stage, adopting journalism and literature definitely as his means of livelihood.

He contributed to all the high-class journals and magazines, and in 1841 took his seat at the *Punch* table. *The Complete Letter-writer*, and *Mrs. Caudle's Curtain Lectures*, were his chief humorous contributions to the *London Charivari*. His figure was short, and sturdy of build; his profile sharp and tending to the classic. His grey hair fell profusely about his forehead, giving him almost a forbidding expression, whilst I have heard my father say that his eyes were the keenest he had ever seen, piercing through even to the very marrow of you. He never minded hurting people's susceptibilities, his acrid wit and caustic criticism being equally and freely bestowed alike upon friends and enemies. He sang well, and was intensely fond of music. After his acquaintance with Forster he seems to have contributed

regularly to the *Examiner*. His position with regard to this paper does not appear to have been a very happy one. A letter of his to Forster, who was then editor-in-chief, concerning his proposed resignation, infers that Forster had intervened to smooth matters a little. The letter is undated, and without any address.

"*Thursday.*

"MY DEAR FORSTER,

"I prepared copy this week, not having heard from Mr. Fonblanque, to whom I had promised a continuance until he should have made another election. I, however, avail myself of your offer, and on the close of the present week, lay down my office. I quit the *Examiner* with regret, but my present office is susceptible of a misrepresentation in no way conducive to my interests, or agreeable to my feelings.

"That this misrepresentation, I hope not consciously, has been made, and by Blanchard, is, however, scarcely worth a thought.

"Ever yours,

"D. JERROLD."

"At the Club, in full conclave, on Saturday week, my position on the *Examiner* was, I understand, *defined*, that is, represented in no very flattering way to me."

It does not seem that the "misrepresentation" was ever put right, or that Jerrold, after the date of this letter, contributed further to the paper.

Jerrold had a ready wit in the writing of short, hasty notes, quite epigrammatic.

Here is one to Forster. The genial, Falstaffian editor of *Punch*, Mark Lemon, had been ill for some time, but was now convalescent.

Jerrold was no respecter either of persons or circumstances; death itself was with him but a mere peg upon which to hang a joke or an epigram.

"*August 25th*, 1848.

"DEAR FORSTER,

"Lemon has been at death's door, but has kept on the *outside*.

"Ever yours,

"D. JERROLD."

Once, and once only, did he receive a "snub" from the "arbitrary" editor of the *Examiner*. It was when Thomas Cooper, the Radical, Socialist, Chartist, or what you will (in these days they are practically one and the same), sought a publisher for his *Purgatory of Suicides*, and in his endeavour asked Jerrold's assistance.

Jerrold, whose political opinions were of a hazy, mysteriously indefinite character, did his best with some of his editor and publisher friends, but, it seems, without success. Amongst others he approached Forster, who, however, in his "up right and down straight" fashion declined to have anything to do with Mr. Cooper's work. I am not sure, but I should imagine that Jerrold would resent this non-compliance with his request, and that it would result in a "cloud between."

There is nothing more said about it, so we may suppose that after a while the cloud passed over.

The most prosperous time of Jerrold's life was his editorship of *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*, to which he was appointed in 1852, retaining it until his death in 1857. The post was worth £1,000 a year to him. He wrote much in the paper, and, indeed, stamped his individuality strongly upon it. His was an early "burning-out of the lamp" at 54, but he was a man of fierce, almost savage energy where his convictions were concerned (in this particular notably evincing his parallelism with Landor), this unnatural "living on himself" (like the camel on his own hump), being the indirect, if not the direct cause of his death. As I have said, there was no specially close bond between him and Forster, but there was sufficient friendliness (quite a different thing from friendship) in their mutual relations to warrant Jerrold's inclusion amongst those whom Forster knew. At his funeral Forster was one of the pall-bearers. It was a mark of respect to a talented journalist and man of letters, and an outward and visible sign of great personal loss. Jerrold, it should be added, played Stephen in the "Guild" performances of *Every Man in his Humour*, and, it is recorded, played it well.

Chapter X : "*Barry Cornwall*" *and Tennyson*

BRYAN WALLER PROCTER (better known by his pen-name of Barry Cornwall), father of Adelaide Procter, the poetess, and born in 1787, was the most intimate friend of Forster for more than thirty years. Their friendship was not of that "heart to heart" nature as was that of Forster with Dickens, Bulwer Lytton, or Browning—it was just that bright, pleasant form of intimacy, that happy, irresponsible *camaraderie*, full of life and sympathy, always optimistic where the other side is concerned, and ever ready with the right word, at the right moment, and in the right place. This phase of mind was more truly that of Procter than of Forster. From a literary point of view, the former was more in the way of being a distinguished amateur, than a real, hard-working professional poet. Carlyle's description of him is very apt, if by implication a trifle caustic.

"Procter," he says, in a letter to a friend (not Forster), "is a pretty little fellow, bodily and spiritually." True, but he was far more than this—he was kindly and generous to a fault, his good deeds, done in secret, keeping him a poor man to the day of his death.

No one, howsoever well-disposed, could honestly

say that " Barry Cornwall " was a great poet. Indeed, as poets go, his claims are by no means high. But he had that which, in the circumstances, perhaps, was worth quite as much as the best, if not more—the keen insight, and instinctive faculty of the born literary critic. His services to young genius were many and valuable. Browning, and later, Swinburne, owed much to his kindly criticism and advice, and even Forster, the universally acknowledged adviser-in-chief, did not, on occasion, disdain to avail himself of the wisdom of the old man oracular. His verse was of the " dainty " kind, and full of the quaint " conceits " of the old seventeenth century poets, the Wallers (he was named after Edmund of that ilk), the Lovelaces, and the Sucklings, of that most picturesquely poetic of periods.

I never read that most beautiful of all the pieces that Lovelace wrote: " Stone walls do not a prison make," without thinking of Barry Cornwall. Simple-minded as a child almost, he cared little or nothing for the world and its ways.

Possibly his early association with Lamb and Leigh Hunt; than whom never lived two men more single-hearted or, as Carlyle might have phrased it, " without the mark of the beast; " accounted largely for his own unsophisticated, gentleness of soul. That such a man with a disposition so absolutely anti-legal or judicial, should be " in the law "; first as a solicitor, and then as a barrister (being " called " a few years previously to his appointment as a Commissioner in Lunacy), seems at first sight somewhat paradoxical, but life itself is a paradox at the best of times, and one not easy

of interpretation. As a letter-writer he was extraordinarily prolific and industrious.

Indeed, if the nearly 400 letters to Forster extant, are a fair sample and indication of his industry, his time, in the intervals of business and literary composition, must have been wholly taken up with his correspondence with one and another. Some of his letters to Forster are, of course, only mere notes *de circonstance*, but the bulk of them are long, detailed accounts of anything and everything under the sun. If Horace Walpole be the King of letter-writers (his letters to Sir H. Mann alone would entitle him to the honour), Procter certainly ought to be acclaimed Prince of the Blood Royal. A large proportion of his correspondence was, as may be imagined, just about nothing at all, the amiable trickling on to paper of the "passings-by" of the hours. But every now and then he strikes a deeper note, and a trenchant criticism; a keen disquisition on some question of the day; a sympathetic reference to some mutual friend's loss or sorrow, marks the page, unfailingly creating the impression the writer intended to convey.

Save and except occasional articles for the magazines, his only prose work of any importance was a *Life of Edmund Kean*, which, from his intimate knowledge of things theatrical, ought to have been more entertaining than it really is. From so light a hand, it is curious that so heavy a work should have proceeded, the only explanation being that in prose composition he was a little out of his element.

With regard to his friendship with Forster, I have



B. W. PROCTER

From an engraving

come to the conclusion that the story of it will best be told by the quoting of a few of his letters; those, in fact, which deal with their mutual sympathies and interests.

The selection was by no means an easy task, the immense amount of material considered. Procter had the fault, so common among artistic people of that day, of seldom if ever dating his letters; in only very rare instances, indeed, adding the address. The omission, especially in the case of date, makes literary arrangement extremely difficult where chronology is concerned, and it is only through my own personal recollections extending so far back as the early "fifties," that I am enabled to identify events and, except in a few cases, fix day, month, and year. Writing quite early in their friendship, Procter says—

"13 Upper Harley Street,
"Monday, May 8th, 1853.

"My dear Forster,

"I write this lest I should find myself unable to call upon you. I saw Mrs. Stowe (Harriet Beecher Stowe, authoress of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*), on Saturday—a quiet little unaffected woman.

"And yesterday *I saw a table move!*

"As yet I (who am sceptical about all these things) can say nothing. If the table move under *my own* hands I will believe. You see I am bad as Thomas (but not as good).

"Yours ever,
"B. W. Procter."

I distinctly remember Mrs. Stowe's visit to England, and the "fuss" there was made over her. Queen Victoria received her, and she was the "lioness" of the year. *Uncle Tom* was, I suppose, the most discussed, and most widely read book in the English-speaking world at that time. Opinions varied with regard to it, as they do even now, but the general verdict I think was that it was "vastly entertaining" (if somewhat sorrowful and blood-curdling), but rather too highly coloured. As for the "table-turning" referred to by the writer, this particular form of spiritualistic jugglery was at that time very much in evidence. Indeed, at "parties," it was by no means uncommon for the company, by way of amusement, to try and make the "table turn." It is not difficult to determine Procter's views on the subject. He will believe what he "touches"—and so say all of us !—in matters spiritualistic, that is.

There is one notable feature about the majority of his letters, and that is, their playfulness of spirit. He seemed to be ever "bubbling over" with the joyousness and sunshine of life; as, indeed, was Leigh Hunt, though in a different way. Childlike, without being childish, it was this always pleasant, simple-hearted buoyancy of soul which rendered him such a delightful correspondent and companion.

He was truly a perennial source of comfort to Forster; stimulating too, as a tonic, the latter's chronic state of ill-health inducing long spells of gloom and depression. Procter looked to Forster for practically everything new in the world of journals, magazines and books, as too, he did for "orders for the play." What a pleasant

world it was in which these literary and artistic men and women of the last century lived. It is all gone now, and, in its stead, commercialism reigns, and rules despotically with an iron hand. Here is a letter of Procter's, undated, and without address.

Nothing much in it of importance, perhaps, but how full it is of the *vim*, the essence of intelligent, healthy, happy life.

"*Sunday evening.*

"MY DEAR FORSTER,

"Your people have never sent me the *weekly* paper, as you promised. I am going to try to buy one. Perhaps you will mention this, as Monday is a day '*after* the fair'—and as they probably neglect other people as well as me. . . . My wife says, 'Mr. Forster seems quite to have deserted *me*,'—and I reply (I am your friend)—'Yes—it is his habit.'

"Yours ever,

"B. W. PROCTER."

"P.S.—I really have not wanted the *daily*, but I *do* want the *weekly*."

The following epistle is curiously comical, inasmuch as it at first appears to ignore innocently the fact of Forster himself being a "Geordie" born and bred, with sly hits afterwards at the latter fact.

It is the letter from which, when writing of Jerrold, I quoted the description of a provincial theatrical performance.

"*24th August*, 1843.
"Queen's Head Hotel,
"Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

"MY DEAR FORSTER,

"(This from the Kingdom of Northumbria.) You who are in the South amongst halcyon skies, calm, cloudless, and azure, can scarcely imagine what exists here, in the region of the smoke-king. A thousand mouths (all devilish) are eternally vomiting up their black breath. Between me and the sky, which I suppose 'bends over all'—although I see nothing of it—hangs a cloud impenetrable.

"I have cursed Leeds in my time, but this is twice as black. According to the Song of Dante, who speaks of a certain king, who reigned over islands sacred to alligators, there were—

> "'Fifty wives as black as soot (*sutt*),
> And fifty more of double smutt'—

"The last came originally from this ancient town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. King *Cole* abided here, as tradition goes, and in fact (I speak confidentially, as I am bound to secrecy), he is *here still!*—in one of the lunatic asylums. Rex!—although he is no longer merry.

"The boots at this inn is a negro (this is a fact, I assure you), and when one man says to another 'black is the white of your eye,' it is no longer a joke, but a dismal truth. . . . I see illustrious names here. . . . Forster, Proctor (with an *O*). I'll try if I can

discover the name of 'White'—but no—the thing is impossible. There is not even a whitesmith in the town, they are all blacksmiths.

"The language here is very curious—sounding like Scotch very often. 'Can ye nae spak, himie?' is surely frae the far North. I listened repeatedly for the Northumbrian bur-r (precious to the ear of friendship), but I have never detected it yet. Is it that I do not really know it? or that I know it only in its state of refinement, when it comes 'Mended from the Tongue' of my Forster?

"Perhaps so. (I am called away.)

"I have been travelling about, and seeing madhouses from morning to night, ever since I wrote the above, but now (I thank the gods) to London again.

"My dear Forster, if you wish to have a bad bed—a night-light which goes out at midnight—the smell of the stables ever in your nostrils—a dumbean waiter ('dumbean' is delicious), and other things of similar quality—go to the *Conservative* Hotel, the Waterloo, at Durham.

"Yours very sincerely,

"B. W. Procter."

"P.S.—I drank Macready's health in solemn silence at seven o'clock on Friday evening."

The next letter contains allusions to two long-forgotten things—a play, and a person.

"13 Upper Harley Street,
"*Thursday, Nov.* 28.

"MY DEAR FORSTER,

"The bearer will deliver the *Ladder of Gold*[1] (with the thanks of all here)—and I will wait for the *Order* for the Box.

"Yours ever,
"B. W. PROCTER."

"P.S.—As yet, I can see nothing in Clough, but I suppose I shall find a kernel in time.

"Edith is very anxious to read *Peter the Whaler*, and my wife to read *Natalie*. We cannot get either of them at the neighbouring library. My wife says, 'We cannot ask Mr. Forster for any more books at present,'—but I who know the bounty of my Forster, have no misgiving."

I give the following short note, as it is an interesting side-light upon one of the social customs of that day. Who, indeed, in this twentieth century, would expect to find a gentleman dining at a London coffee-house? The very idea of it calls up a picture, century-old and quaint.

"*Tuesday, Oct., '52.*

"MY DEAR FORSTER,

"Should there be no Kenyon dinner for us to-morrow, I will dine at the Gray's Inn Coffee-House at six precisely, and shall hope to see you there.

"Yours ever (in haste),
"B. W. PROCTER."

[1] Dramatisation by Charles Reade of his novel, *Hard Cash*. The play was produced at Drury Lane, but was not a great success.

Or again,

"13 Upper Harley Street,
"*Wednesday, Dec.* 4.

"MY DEAR FORSTER,

"All thanks for your kind note. I have seen Hunt's first number!

"Always yours,
"B. W. PROCTER."

He is referring to Hunt's short-lived magazine. What he thought about it is contained in the note of exclamation.

It was in December, 1855, that Procter was promoted from Secretary of the Lunacy Commission to Commissioner; interest being used with Lord Shaftesbury, the Chairman, to appoint Forster to the vacant secretaryship.

The latter was sworn in on December the 24th. As I have already stated, and as is well known, he was subsequently made a Commissioner. Writing in October, 1856, after the publication of Mrs. Browning's *Aurora Leigh*, Procter warmly praises the poem, from a constructive point of view, and as a wonderfully beautiful example of poetic expression. But he does not like the subject. The "problem" poem, or novel, or play, was distasteful to him. As he says in another letter, the reading of such things "leaves a nasty taste in the mouth." Were he alive to-day, I fear that he would have to expend much breath upon that phrase, alike with respect to plays as to books. His criticisms upon Robert Browning's work were always whole-hearted to

the point of enthusiasm. Yet, at the same time, his judgment seldom or ever erred. Herein he was like his friend Forster, whose wise use of the balance in things critical was proverbial. One of Procter's most charming characteristics was his thorough enjoyment of wholesome, harmless fun. A notable example of this was his gay badinage with Mrs. Forster, whom towards the end of his life he called by her Christian name, Eliza. For instance. Many people who are alive to-day will remember, a considerable number of years ago, a certain Red Indian, named Deerfoot, who, for a time, held the blue ribbon of the cinder path.

His name was on every one's lip, until an Englishman, or American—I forget which—came along and snatched all the honours. Before this happened, however, the joke, as between Procter and Mrs. Forster, began. In a postscript to a letter to Forster the former asks: "Do you wish me to enter Mrs. Forster when the next race with Deerfoot comes off?" Forster, whose thoughts ran more on the high things of history and literature, than on the triumphs of the cinder-path, must have been sorely puzzled upon reading this enigmatic query. Mrs. Forster and Deerfoot—two people as far apart as the poles! Before he could fairly get to the bottom of the mystery, there arrived another missive requesting to know—as a matter of the very highest moment!—when Mrs. Forster—Eliza—intended to commence her training for the great event, as Deerfoot was already on the ground daily, really, as well as metaphorically, "putting his best foot foremost." And so the fun went on, Mrs. Forster entering into the spirit of it with all the

zest shown by the youthful old mirth-maker himself. His regard for Mrs. Forster was very great; "Eliza," he says, in a letter to her, "is a pearl among women."

Again, in a letter to her husband, is a postscript addressed to her, containing an invitation to her to dine with him on his 82nd birthday. "I am in my second childhood," he says, and the writing is nearly illegible, "and shall soon be able to make love to you in J. F.'s absence." By this time he must have been almost past dinner-giving, and festivities of any sort, for, nine years before, in writing to Forster, he pathetically wails, "almost 73! B. W. Procter (old, and deaf, and stupid, and infirm)." Quite in his last days, a pitiable scribble to Forster records, that "Mrs. Forster called here yesterday with her friend Miss Knight."

Miss Maria Knight was my mother's sister, and did not long survive the widow of John Forster. The three last extracts are, chronologically speaking, anticipating a little, but referring as they do to the "good comradeship" existent between Mrs. Forster, her husband, and their old friend, no apology is, I think, needed. Another instance of Procter's strict impartiality in criticising his friend Forster's literary work, is seen in his opinion of the *Life of Landor*.

It was, from Procter's point of view, not altogether satisfactory. "Doubtful," is his "softened-down" expression. The reason for what he conceives to be the comparative failure of the book (as a practical literary asset, that is), is, he thinks, to be found in the enormous amount of overwork undertaken by Forster, as at this time, and, indeed always, which would undoubtedly

be to the detriment of such a monumental and important biography as that of Landor. Procter does not go so far in his adverse criticism as Mr. Percy Fitzgerald, who, it seems to me, is not a little, in fact unduly hard upon his old friend. If, as I have said elsewhere, Forster was, confessedly (and the great friendship between the two men considered, perhaps, pardonably) inclined to be over-partial in his treatment of his subject it is not to be wondered at. He might have been—he certainly was—dogmatic, arbitrary, indeed, to a degree, but he was never spiteful, or, of set purpose, ill-natured. I do not say—no one can really say—that *Landor's Life* is a *readable* book. It is not. Its heaviness, and ponderous solemnity make it a book for the serious student, rather than for the ordinary reader. One can almost imagine Forster himself, fagged to death almost with a ceaseless pressure of work, having every now and then to "pull himself together," as it were, and brace himself to his herculean task with fresh, and ever-diminishing effort. The result was, as Procter says, "doubtful," and having said that, one says everything. About the time of the "Landor" book, Dickens had it in mind to go to America, for "reading" purposes, a scheme against which Procter, in the interest, as he conceived, of Dickens himself, resolutely set his face.

Writing to Forster on the subject he says: "I am sorry to hear that Dickens is going to America." He then quotes Macready's unfortunate experience, and fears that Dickens will come in for some of the ill-feeling aroused by the Macready-Forrest business.

Too, he did not feel sure that the prejudice, engendered

by *Chuzzlewit* and *American Notes*, had died down, fearing that if it still existed, Dickens's interests would indubitably suffer. On the eve of the great novelist's departure for the United States, he writes again to Forster, repeating his regrets that the American visit is now an accomplished fact. Later on, when reports of the great success of the American experiment follow fast upon the heels of one another, who so ready as Procter to "eat his own words," although he stoutly maintains that the whole thing was really a "fearful risk."

Writing to Forster he says: "I rejoice to hear of Dickens making large money in America. It will make up, in an indirect way, for the losses of Charles Dickens, Junior, in the paper-mill business, for which speculation, as of course you know, Miss Burdett-Coutts found the money."

After that invitation to Mrs. Forster to dinner on his 82nd birthday, the tide of "Barry Cornwall's" life ebbed faster and faster out to sea. It was nearly "sans everything" with him now. Friends had he in plenty, and the love of his own, but it was not in the London he loved—really loved—that he died, but in Paris, then the scene of the "clearing-up" after the war, and of the new Republican "settling-down." In the "Gay City" Bryan Waller Procter, the ever-gay, went out, two years before his friend Forster, to meet the future. Physically small, he was great, heart and soul, mind and spirit, to be written down, as "one who loved his fellow-men."

I am unable to fix the date of Forster's first meeting

with Tennyson. As a matter of fact, authentic material with regard to their friendship is not easily obtainable, outside that which the present Lord Tennyson says about it in the *Memoir* of his father.

In the matter of age, there was three years' difference between them, Tennyson being the elder, having been born in 1809.

The first available mention of their companying together, is at a dinner, given sometime in 1842, by Thackeray, Forster then being the literary critic of the *Examiner*. I have already alluded to this "feast, and flow of soul" (held, presumably, at *The Cock* Tavern, Fleet Street), in my notes on Maclise, and merely refer to it again as a possible starting-point for what little I have to say about the friendship of the poet with John Forster. Saville Morton, one of the most brilliant journalists of his day, describes this particular dinner (at which he himself was evidently present), in a letter to Mary Brotherton, author of *Rosemary for Remembrance*, and *Old Acquaintance*. Lord Tennyson refers to it (in a note) in his *Memoir*.

In 1847 an unpleasant incident occurred in which Tennyson, Bulwer Lytton, and John Forster characteristically figured. I do not care to give a detailed account of it here, as Lord Tennyson has, in his book, said all that there is to be said about it. It was all very unfortunate, and never should have happened.

Still, I should like to quote the great poet's final words on the subject, as they show him in the light of a truly noble-hearted man.

"Wretched work," he writes, "*Odium literarium*."

He added (and surely, worthier words were never penned), "I never sent my lines to *Punch*. John Forster did. They were too bitter. I do not think that I should ever have published them."

Harmful words are, in the utterance, as the "letting out of water." Tennyson did not believe in the letting out of water. He might fill the cistern, but—he would not turn the tap to "let the water flow." Herein was his courage. All honour to his memory.

At the latter end of 1849 Mrs. Gaskell, the author of *Mary Barton*, wrote to Forster, asking for an introduction to Tennyson, in connection with Samuel Bamford, the Lancashire weaver, and author of *Life of a Radical*. Mrs. Gaskell wished, I believe, to enlist the poet's interest on behalf of Bamford, who was now old, and greatly desirous of having a copy of Tennyson's poems for himself. With his usual kindness of heart, the author of *In Memoriam* writes at once to Forster that he will, as soon as maybe, instruct Moxon (his publisher) to forward the books—adding that he reckoned Bamford's admiration as the highest honour he had ever received.

Bamford's acknowledgment of the receipt, through Mrs. Gaskell, of the poems, is touchingly beautiful, and would put many a graduate in the higher education to shame.

It was through Forster that Macready first heard that Tennyson had written a laudatory sonnet on his leaving the stage.

This latter event took place in 1851, the year of the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park.

There was, of course, a farewell banquet to the retiring

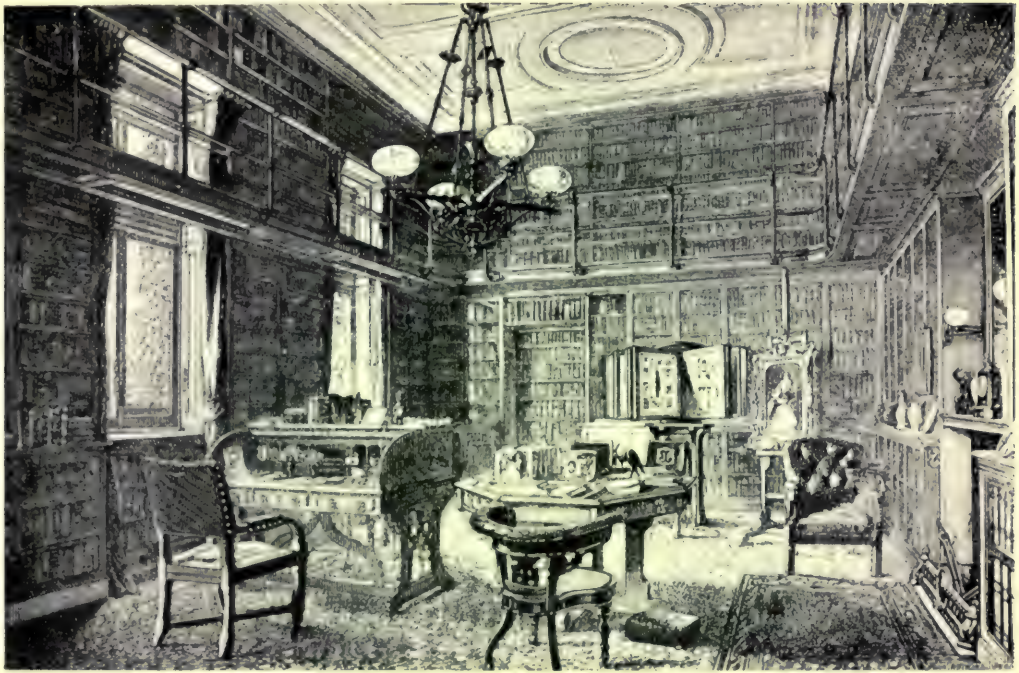
actor, at which Bulwer Lytton presided, and in the course of which Dickens made one of his usual felicitous speeches.

On April 4th Macready wrote to Tennyson a warm letter of thanks for the sonnet addressed to himself, the great poet thus ringing down the curtain, as it were, upon the last act of the great actor-manager's professional career.

Tennyson was an occasional guest at Forster's table both at Montague Square, and afterwards at the fine new house the latter had built for himself at Palace Gate, Kensington.

At Montague Square, so the story goes, he met Count D'Orsay, the friend, and sometime secretary, of Louis Napoleon.

Says Tennyson: "I, the poet of England, with the secretary of Louis Napoleon, whom I have abused!" It is not quite clear whether it were the Prince or the secretary, whom he meant as having abused, but whichever of the two it was, it was none the less an embarrassing position for Tennyson. Forster, sensible man though he was, dearly loved a title, even a foreign one, and, according to Tennyson, he was so impressed and glamoured by the meretricious splendours of the Count's good looks, gorgeous dandyism in costume, and general aristocratic air, that he had no eyes, ears, or conversation for any one else at the table. It only shows how the wisest of us sometimes incline to the foolish, in spite of our vaunted wisdom. Tennyson married in the summer of 1850, and in the August of 1852 wrote to Forster announcing the birth of the present Lord Tenny-



JOHN FORSTER'S LIBRARY AT PALACE GATE, KENSINGTON

From a drawing by John Watkins

son, the boy being named Hallam, after his father's dead friend. The correspondence between the poet and Forster was at best intermittent, Forster often complaining of his friend's laxity in writing. This, after awhile, would call forth from Tennyson a semi-penitent, semi-explanatory letter in response, and then all was well again—until the next time. The most interesting however, of all Tennyson's letters to Forster, is, in my opinion, the one in reference to The Charge of the Light Brigade, or The Charge of Balaclava as he himself calls it. It seems that after its first publication in the *Examiner* by Forster, the stirring poem found its way to the Crimea, becoming a huge favourite with the soldiers. By-and-by copies of it were asked for on behalf of the men, by a chaplain of the S.P.G. Tennyson, hearing of this, wrote to Forster, and requested him to have a large number of copies printed for distribution among the soldiers, each copy to bear the legend: "From A. Tennyson." The effect was extraordinary, the general verdict of the soldiers being that the poem was "splendid!" This was in 1855, after which, Forster; who, as editor of the *Examiner*, and with his mind and hands full of high literary aims, projects and labours, had little time to spare for correspondence, and friendly intercourse; wrote to Tennyson but infrequently, meeting him even still more rarely. Then in December of the same year ('55) came his appointment as Secretary to the Lunacy Commission, which, although it involved his resignation as editor of the *Examiner*, tied him to official duties, which, if not exactly arduous, absorbed much valuable time.

That this view is not imaginary, and merely suppositious, is proved by there being no mention of Forster's name, under date 1876 (the year of his death), in Lord Tennyson's *Memoir*. The last years of Forster's life were, as we know, occupied to the full with three great literary undertakings: the *Landor* life, that of Dickens, and his *Swift* book, the first volume only of which he lived to complete and publish. Still, although there is no allusion to his "passing" in the poet's biography, it is pleasant to imagine that Tennyson did give a thought to his old friend in his death-hour, and that he rendered him the friend's tribute of a loving, if a silent, "God speed!" on his journey into the Illimitable Beyond.

Chapter XI : *The Rev. Alexander Dyce, and a Great Lord Chief*

NO two men were ever more intellectually alike than Alexander Dyce and John Forster, the only difference between them being, that Dyce was more of the literary antiquary than was the other, his tastes and researches also leading him in the direction of Shakespeare and the older Elizabethan dramatists, rather than, as in Forster's case, among the witty writers of the Carolian, and Georgian periods.

Apart from this the two men may almost be said to have worked and studied in practically parallel grooves—while, close friends during the greater part of their lives, even in death they are not divided, for the wonderful literary and artistic treasures they each lived to accumulate now rest side by side at South Kensington, a heritage of price for those capable of estimating and profiting by the value of it. With a common sympathy, therefore, which developed with the years, the friendship of Dyce and Forster grew in like proportion. Although inclining largely, in his researches towards the ancient classic dramatists of Greece and Rome, the Elizabethan drama was his chief study. It is here that, in breaking away from Forster, he becomes really great. Greene, Beau-

mont, Fletcher, Otway, Webster, all received the magic touch of interpretation at his hand. His knowledge of his subject was alike prodigious and sure. He never slipped, or even hesitated, so that as a guide to the classic Elizabethan drama he may be relied upon without fear or question.

From the day when, as a boy, he was taken by Mrs. Smollett; the widow of a nephew of the famous novelist; to see John Kemble in Brutus, and when Sir Walter Scott (then plain Mr. Sheriff Scott) came into the box, and said to Mrs. Smollett, on Kemble being announced to play Sir Giles Overreach the next night, that Sir Giles was a Richard the Third in low life—from this day he became hopelessly, and irretrievably, devoted to the things of the stage.

In his day India was the average Englishman's El Dorado, and General Dyce was anxious that his son should take advantage of, and secure his share of it. "Alick," however, stoutly stood out against the proposal, but, on his father's insisting that he should alternatively adopt the Church for a profession, he took orders. Of course the stage fever, as well as his passion for English poetry, had gone with him to Oxford in 1815. The story goes (according to Forster), that he approached the "great John" (Kemble) with a respectful written request to be informed which was the particular night fixed for the actor's farewell appearance. Kemble's reply had the gravity and stateliness of a bishop, and was to the effect, that he didn't know himself. It turned out, however, to be the 29th of June, 1817, and the nineteen-year-old young enthusiast was present.

Two years later, he also saw a far greater artist act for the last time. But Mrs. Siddons's first farewell had been taken seven years before, and her fame had not profited by subsequent appearances in aid of family benefits. In spite of this, however, Dyce always spoke of portions of this particular performance of Lady Randolph on that night, with almost reverential awe, as a thing quite apart in his memory. To Edmund Kean, the brilliant histrionic genius who blazed out upon the London stage as the elder Kembles quitted it, Dyce was less strongly attracted. First impressions in these matters go for much; even the grief of Mrs. Siddons, to those who had given allegiance to Mrs. Pritchard, seemed the grief of a "cheesemonger's wife." Something of the same style of criticism was in Dyce's description of Kean's Duke of Gloster, as a "pot-house Richard." He only served two short curacies; the first that of the small Cornish fishing-village of Llanteglos; the other that of Nayland, in Suffolk. On the giving up of the last named, he buried himself, until 1859, in a set of musty old chambers in Gray's Inn Square. Out of this retreat he was forced by his brother, General Archibald Dyce, who induced him, after much remonstrance and persuasion, to remove to Oxford Terrace, Hyde Park, where he resided for the rest of his life. Both in Gray's Inn Square and at his new house Forster was a frequent visitor. In his rooms in the old Inn (where everything was much the same as it had been in Addison's time), the books lined every wall, overflowing even into all the nooks and crannies in the passages. We can picture the dignified, deliberate author of *The Statesmen of the*

Commonwealth picking his stately way amongst all this literary débris, towards the dark, dusty centre, where, poring over some brown-leaved copy of Greene, perhaps, or Peele, or, maybe, Marlowe, or even Shakespeare sat, spider-like, the man with the brain to weigh and interpret the thoughts, fancies, and conceits of the old Elizabethan worthies—Alexander Dyce.

Forster loved—passionately loved books; especially those dealing with the social, political, and dramatic history of the early nineteenth, eighteenth, and later seventeenth centuries; but his passion was as nothing compared with that of Alexander Dyce. He pictures the latter as haunting the old London bookshops and salerooms in his search for rare bargains, his stout gold-headed cane borne over his shoulder, instead of being legitimately used to support his tall, bent figure. His face was animated, intelligent, and handsome, judging from the copy of a miniature belonging to his mother. In manner ever studiously courteous and quiet (in his youth he had been called the " gentle giant "), he stooped very much, as men above the average height, and of a " bookish " disposition, are usually given to do, and his now massive person had ceased to receive much advantage from the scrupulous attention he had once paid to the superficials of dress. The amount of his personal luggage, on the occasion of a week's visit to a friend, has been described as " seven shirts and a *Sophocles*."

In 1857 he issued his own edition of the greatest of all the Elizabethan poets, while it is interesting to note that his second, and more valuable edition of it, containing a noble Glossary, into which he poured the



THE REV. ALEXANDER DYCE

From an engraving by C. H. Jeens

reading of his life, was published by Messrs. Chapman and Hall, so long associated with Charles Dickens, and who are responsible for the publication of the present work. With Dyce, Shakespeare was ever all in all. Marlowe, he considered to be, without question, the greatest genius of the Elizabethan stage next to Shakespeare, and Dyce's labours to illustrate and interpret the latter poet (confessedly greater than all his brethren) were never once discontinued, and was the subject of his first book as of his last. Like many another man of letters, Dyce left something unfinished, a translation of *Athenæus*. Not very far from completion, the MS. is with his books at South Kensington, where, some day, perhaps, an enthusiast for the Deipnosophists (I am afraid that in these days it would be difficult to find one) may think it worth the pains of unearthing.

The last letter of Dyce to Forster, before his final illness, dated June, 1868, told his friend that he felt, he was thankful to say, "unusually well." But the next, also to Forster, at the beginning of August, written from the bedroom he was never to quit again, told how that he might be "shown," by way of contrast to the "Yellow Dwarf" (Little Robson was then electrifying the town with this, the most eccentrically-wonderful of his creations), having become a yellow giant. "Being free from pain," he goes on to say, "which Horace Walpole defined to be the pleasure of old age, I ought to be satisfied; but I nevertheless am ill, *ill*, ILL, exhausted from inability to sleep and to eat, my nights intolerable, my days wearisome because I cannot read, and when,

or how it is to end, seems uncertain." Again, on the 4th of December of the same year, he writes: "In the seventh heaven of my martyrdom, and very little better on the whole . . . I suspect that I am very gradually dying; and if such is the case, I certainly have no reason to make any childish lamentation, for I have lived a great deal longer than most people who are born in this world, and I look back on my past existence without much disapprobation." He was seventy-one when he died in 1869, and Forster himself says, that he "deplored his old friend's death as a loss which he could never replace; for all the qualities that give charm to private intercourse were his in abundant measure." He was conversant with all the Elizabethan poets and dramatists: with Jonson, Massinger, Dekker, and Heywood; while, having subjected to his own special study each separate effort by Greene, Peele, Marlowe, Webster, Middleton, Ford, Beaumont, and Fletcher, he altogether objected to placing Shakespeare only at the top of the same list with these his brilliant contemporaries. "Shakespeare," he said, "was not only immeasurably superior to his Elizabethan comrades in creative power, profound thought, and insight into the human heart, but stood quite distinctly apart from the whole of them in his methods of delineating character, in language, in versification, and in peculiarities of diction." Originally, Dyce intended to bequeath his books to the Bodleian, but Forster suggested to him that they ought to be placed with the rest of his collection at South Kensington, where they would be within reach of a wider world of students. This appeared to satisfy

a secret wish he always seemed to have had—that they should be kept together, not merely as a memorial of the employments and enjoyments of his own life, but as a means of helping others engaged in like pursuits. The South Kensington Museum was, therefore, chosen to receive them. In his office as the executor of his old friend, it was a labour of love with Forster to see that all was carried out in accordance with the testator's wishes; while, his own state of health considered, we may, not unduly, wonder if his thoughts went forward a little to the time when some other hand would do the same work for all that he himself had in intention for the benefit of the studious amongst his fellow countrymen.

The last service rendered by Forster to his dead friend, was the editing of the third edition, 9 vols., of Shakespeare's Works, a service admirably and lovingly done.

One of the greatest of the Lord Chief Justices of England, Sir Alexander Cockburn, was on terms of friendly intimacy with Forster, as also was he with Dickens. In private life the " Lord Chief " was one of the most genial of men, opinions and statements to the contrary notwithstanding.

He was at his best at a snug dinner of six. There it was you quite lost sight of his bench appearance and manner: the sphinx-like face, the wig pushed back well off the forehead, the small, keenly observant eyes taking in everything before him in every corner of the court; the occasional caustic word, the politely incredulous smile—all these professional signs of the great judge were completely forgotten, as the super-agreeable, delightfully self-possessed, well-informed man-

of-the-world discoursed pleasantly upon everything under the sun, and with every now and then a racy anecdote, told in a racy way, that set the table, not exactly in a roar, but in a decorous titter of enjoyable appreciation, that was quite as effective, and vastly better suited to the august neighbourhood of the Lord Chief Justice of these realms.

Most people nowadays, who are old enough to remember the long-drawn-out trial of the Tichborne Claimant, will recollect in what a masterly way Cockburn summed up the case. It, of course, has nothing whatever to do with Forster, but I mention it just to illustrate what manner of man the Lord Chief Justice was.

Also, his marvellous power in marshalling facts; in the "putting of two and two together" (a homely phrase, but fitting the case exactly), and in the logical application of evidence, after he had sifted all the salient points out of it, was as apparent in private as in judicial life. He was never rude to Dr. Kenealy, although that clever, but headstrong advocate time after time sorely tried his patience and forbearance. I was in court several times during the trial, and never once saw Sir Alexander's temper ruffled or disturbed by Kenealy or any one. In private society he was just the same suave, courteous, even-tempered gentleman, which largely contributed to his popularity. He was exclusive, and did not easily make friends: but when he did meet with a congenial spirit he could be charming to a degree. Before his elevation he had been a great advocate, and he was as great a judge. Sir Alexander was, with many other English friends of Dickens and Forster, in Paris

during the Art Exposition of 1856. It was a great foregathering of "all the talents," apart from and besides several lords, ladies, and other society notabilities known to the "Circle." Cockburn, I think (then only Attorney-General), was by no means the least happy-minded person of that invading Anglo-Saxon multitude, and, from all accounts, thoroughly enjoyed himself.

He was the most dignified-looking judge I think I ever saw, and in every essential (more especially when in full scarlet and ermine) realised completely the dread "Majesty of the Law."

Chapter XII : *Some Lesser Friendships*

THERE were many people with whom Forster came in contact during his career, who, either because of their individual personalities, or through their having been, in some way, " linked-up " with him in one or other of the many literary or journalistic ventures with which he was connected or for which he was wholly or in part responsible were to him not friends exactly, but something more than mere acquaintances.

Numberless folk, too, he met, socially, who, although pleasant and interesting, as chance acquaintances often are, did not come permanently into his life. They just were not necessary to his mental and moral well-being. The gate of his " inner circle," he always kept jealously barred and bolted, whilst the key of the " little postern door," no man might know where he kept *that*, so cunningly was it hid away in the depths of his soul. It is necessary to have known John Forster in the flesh —to have met him even once would have sufficed— to be cognisant of this fact. He always struck you (even on first acquaintance), as one who had his more secret thoughts and imaginings well under control. Reserved to the point, sometimes, of rudeness, he never *wore his heart on his sleeve.* It was this habitual austerity

of manner that largely contributed to restrain presumption in others; in all, that is, save those exceptionally clever people to whom, as by intuition, his real manner-veiled power of magnetic attraction revealed itself. With these last it was a case, not of presumption, but of sympathetic response; with the former, the gate was barred and—well—the key of the " little postern door " was not forthcoming. Such an one, in some degree, was W. J. Fox, sometime member of Parliament for Oldham, and mainly remarkable as a man of many avocations. In the course of a long life (1786–1864), he was successively weaver's boy, errand boy, bank clerk, journalist, author, dramatic critic, preacher, politician, and as a Reform leader (self-constituted, I imagine), " stump orator " for the cause. Lincoln's Inn Fields was his favourite " pitch " for his open-air proceedings, his selection of the spot being, perhaps, influenced by its historic association with Lord William Russell, who, in Charles the Second's reign lost his head there, ostensibly for his alleged complicity in the Rye House Plot, but really for his Liberal and anti-Catholic opinions. Forster lived for over twenty years in the " Fields " (No. 58), but, of course, it was only a coincidence that Fox should choose the place as the stage for his " spouting " operations. In 1817, long before Forster came to London, Fox occupied the pulpit of the old Unitarian Chapel, Parliament Court, London. Here he preached for many years, until, in fact, his widely disseminated views on the Marriage Tie, caused the chapel trustees to demand his resignation, and ultimately led to his being absolutely disowned by his fellow ministers of the

Unitarian persuasion. It appears that he repudiated entirely the necessity for a marriage ceremony of any kind—religious or otherwise—although I am not quite sure on the latter point. He may have given-in so far, as to admit the desirability of a civil marriage before a Registrar. He did not make a "very brave show" in the House of Commons, being regarded, I think, by the great majority of his fellow members more as a "crank" than as a man with a serious mission.

It was the journalistic side of him, and his ability as a dramatic critic, that brought him into touch with Forster and his friends. He was on the *Daily News* at the time Forster was writing for it, and, for a short while, editing it. When the latter retired from the paper, Fox, for some unexplained reason, did the same, subsequently editing the *Monthly Repository*. He had the supreme distinction of predicting fame for Robert Browning, after reading the latter's first published poem, *Pauline*, which he praised, not exactly unreservedly, but as a production of the highest promise. His friendship with Browning continued uninterruptedly until his death in 1864. As a literary critic his reputation ranks fairly high, but it is as a dramatic critic that he was best known and appreciated in the journalistic world of his day.

Forster, who himself held high honours in the same field of newspaper work, had the greatest admiration for the other's judgment and analytical capacity, the fellow feeling, possibly, that made him to be kind, if not "wondrous" so, to the ex-M.P. and discredited Unitarian preacher.

It will be remembered that the poet's son married

Fox's daughter, a fact which is more particularly noticeable now, owing to the recent death of the younger Browning at Asola. It is curiously coincident, that the son should die in the year in which we are celebrating the centenary of his famous father. But life is full of coincidences, in spite of editorial scorn and contempt. I remember, many years ago, being roundly taken to task by a certain editor of mine, for relying too much on the " long arm " in my fiction. I promised amendment, but it was of no use, within a week or two things were as bad as ever, and, in my stories, everything was merrily happening as usual in the old familiar, coincidental way.

Fox was one of those present at the famous reading by Dickens of *The Chimes* in Forster's Lincoln's Inn Fields chambers, on the evening of the 2nd of December, 1844. Forster wrote to Fox, inviting him to attend, and the letter is here reproduced in facsimile by kind permission of Messrs. Maggs Bros., the owners. There was a goodly gathering on the occasion, Maclise, who was present, doing a caricature sketch of the scene, with the names of the notabilities above and beneath each figure. Mr. Matz has reproduced the drawing in his memorial edition of Forster's *Life of Dickens*, published this year by Messrs. Chapman and Hall. Forster records, that Fox's attitude and manner during the reading was one of " rapt solemnity." It was quite in line with what little we know of him, a man, earnest and full of purpose, taking life and its issues seriously. He would be sure to estimate this invitation to hear Dickens read his Christmas Story at its real value, and rightly appreciate the

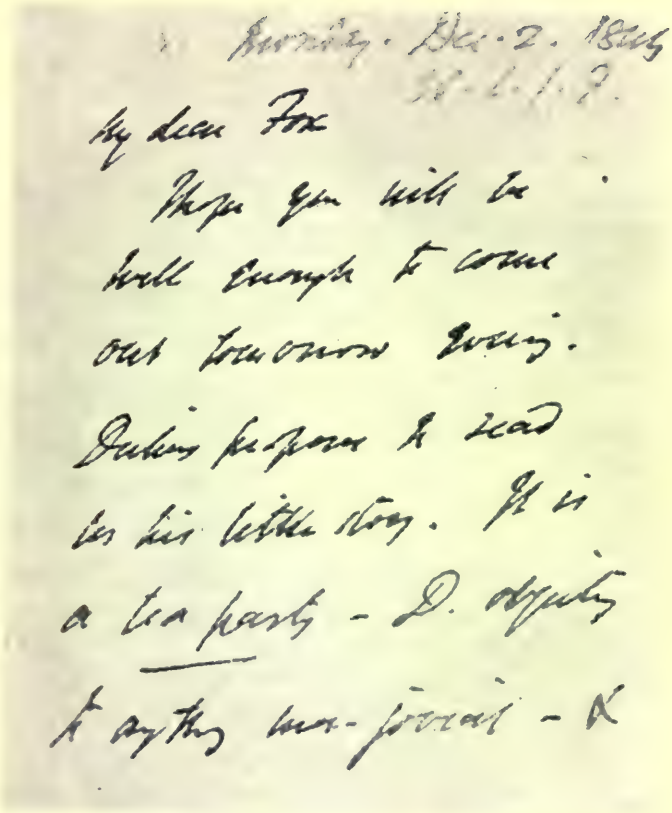
compliment. After the *Chimes* incident Fox, to all intents and purposes, seems to disappear from Forster's life and circle. At any rate, there is no further mention of him by Forster in the Dickens biography.

There may have been some correspondence between the two men during the twenty years that elapsed before the death of Fox, but if there was, the subject-matter of it was evidently not of sufficient importance to warrant notice of it. His claims to remembrance to-day are not great, for though he wrote and spoke much, his literary remains are so insignificant, that they bear on the face of them little or no title to literary immortality.

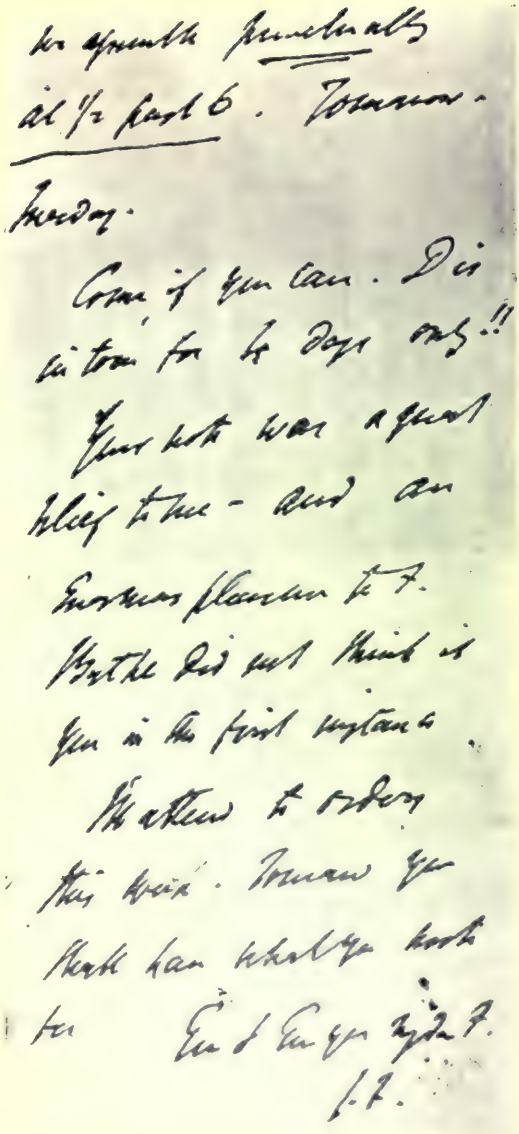
Besides Browning, he was intimate with Macready, Carlyle, Bulwer, Talfourd—indeed, practically with the whole of the Dickens literary and artistic family, but his place in it was more akin to that of "useful companion" than familiar family friend.

There is very little to be said of any friendship between Thackeray and Forster. In the first place they had not much in common, while, paradoxically, they were too much alike ever to have been really good friends.

For instance, they were both quick-tempered, and both inclined to the dogmatic; in other words, they were alike given to, and, indeed, dearly loved "laying down the law." Now it is an old, and well-proved axiom, that "likes" seldom agree. I cannot say that Forster and Thackeray ever fell out, in fact, I am pretty sure that they never gave each other the opportunity. They rightly gauged each other's natures, and accordingly did not rush into one another's arms and swear eternal friendship. They would have been utterly



FACSIMILE OF A LETTER FROM JOHN FORSTER TO W. J. FOX,
FIRST PAGE



FACSIMILE OF A LETTER FROM JOHN FORSTER TO W. J. FOX, PAGES 2 and 3

unlike the real John Forster and William Makepeace Thackeray had they done so. The truth in a nutshell is, that they were alike fond of power, and, by consequence, loved the exercise of it, but at whose expense or hurt was a matter of supreme indifference to both of them. In Thackeray it resulted in something very like "putting the screw on," in a literary sense, that is; with Forster, it induced an "arbitrary" tone of mind and manner, which, with one of like disposition with himself, made him "difficult to get on with." It was not the "Jerrold" nature or manner; *that* was *bitter*, and *stung*.

There was nothing bitter in the dictatorial way of either Thackeray or Forster, it was just the strong-handed assumption of the masterful, and an inordinate desire to reign. It was, in fact, a case of "friend and no friend," and that is why, although the description may seem to be paradoxical, I include the author of *Vanity Fair* among the lesser friendships of John Forster.

With Wilkie Collins, it was different. The clever inventor of the sensational novel was too near in friendship to Charles Dickens, not to be a more than average acquaintance of Dickens's *Fidus Achates*.

His literary medium might not, perhaps, appeal very strongly to the historial student, and writer of other men's lives, but Wilkie Collins, like his brother Charles, had that about him which made men to love him, in spite of themselves. Charles Allston Collins was a very clever man, who, combining in his own person the literary and artistic gifts, devoted the first part of his career to art, subsequently discarding it, and adopting literature as his sole occupation.

Delicacy of thought and expression were more apparent in his books than in his pictures, and his two best works, *The New Sentimental Journey*, and *A Cruise upon Wheels*, well repay the reading even in these later days.

A comparatively young man when he died, he was not only a distinct loss to the literature of his time, but was truly mourned by a large circle of friends, towards whom his gentle, tender nature went out whole-souled, and without stint. Although his brother Wilkie appears continually on the pages of Forster's life of his friend, it is in connection with Dickens only. This, of course, is only right and natural, but one would have thought that there would have been some indication in the book, however slight, of friendship between Forster and Wilkie Collins, had such a friendship (not acquaintance merely) really existed. To put it broadly, Wilkie Collins was not so much Forster's friend as he was the friend of Dickens. Every mention of him in the *Life*, is either as travelling with Dickens on the Continent or in England, or as collaborating with the latter in Christmas fiction for *Household Words*, or in work for the theatre, as, for instance, in *No Thoroughfare* for Charles Fechter and Benjamin Webster at the old Adelphi. There are a few letters extant in the Forster Collection of MSS. at South Kensington, but they are all unimportant, and not by any means of that intimate character, which alone would make them interesting as evidence of a great friendship. As the dear and close friend of Dickens, Collins must, in the nature of things, and, as from personal knowledge I know he did, have "rubbed shoulders" with Forster

in such fashion as to qualify him for the title and position of " friend of the house." But such a title and position do not necessarily mean that Wilkie Collins was to Forster, what Forster was to Dickens.

My friend whom I introduce to you, is, by virtue of that introduction, your friend also, but not as I am your friend, or you mine. Logically, therefore, there is more than one kind of friendship; for my present purpose, two kinds are sufficient, the greater and the lesser. It was in the latter that Wilkie Collins must be included, in his relation to John Forster.

And the same may be said of the great majority of those whose names are mentioned in this chapter.

Of the exceptions, the most notable was Clarkson Stanfield, who, all through the piece, was as much the good friend of Forster as of Dickens. Stanfield's life, from a mere boy, had been quite remarkable. Born in 1793, during the most exciting of the " alarums and excursions " of the Napoleonic wars, he was, in 1812, when barely fifteen years of age, pressed into the Navy, in 1814 being drafted into H.M.S. *Namur*. Here, as before related, he came into contact with young Douglas Jerrold, a young middy newly appointed to the same ship. The two had many tastes in common; one especially, the dramatic, or, rather, the theatrical. Stanfield, being six years the elder, contrived, even in his position of fore-topmast man, to cast the aegis of his protection over the boy-middy—he was but a child really, in years —with the result that the two became fast friends. Of their amateur theatrical enterprises on board the *Namur*, I have already spoken in my remarks on Jerrold. To

conceive a small, delicate lad of eleven in such a position on a "ship-of-the-line," in those bad old days (some people call them "good"—perhaps they were, in a picturesque sense, and looking at them from this distance of time), to think of this child, kicked, cuffed, and cursed, passing his days and nights in a veritable "hell afloat," as were the good old wooden walls in Nelson's day, makes one to lift one's hat, even now, to Clarkson Stanfield, "fo'castle" man; Royal Academician to be, who could make the opportunity—and use it—to "stand by" this forlorn little "brass-bound devil," and, so far as in him lay, "deliver him from the evil." Clarkson Stanfield did all this out of his own big heart, and until he laid down brush, mahl-stick and palette in 1867, a great artist with all the honours, and one of the finest of scene-painters, he was just the same high-souled gentleman as he was, when a "forward hand" on board H.M.S. *Namur* in 1814. It was foreordained that a man such as Stanfield should, sooner or later, find his way into the social circle, of which Dickens, Forster, Maclise, Bulwer Lytton, and Carlyle were the shining lights. It was not possible that he would have been allowed to remain outside. "Stanny," as Dickens called him, was too honest-hearted a prospective comrade to let slip into the unknown. Was it not Dickens himself, who, years afterwards, in a memorial notice in *All the Year Round*, June 1st issue, 1867, said of him: "He was the soul of frankness, generosity, and simplicity, the most loving and most lovable of men"? But before that last, inevitable day came, he was to be the life and soul of the Dickens and Forster coterie. Not a family festival;

not an expedition "out of town," or into "foreign parts," but "Stanny" must be of the party. Did not he paint the Act Drop for the performance at Tavistock House of Wilkie Collins's *Frozen Deep*; and did not this same work of his brush subsequently fetch at auction the enormous sum of £1000 at the Dickens sale? His services were always at the command of his friends; he spared no pains, time, or trouble upon his self-imposed labours, which were ever those of love and pleasure. Like his fellow artist Egg, also, later on, a Royal Academician, he was never happy unless he was "doing something" for somebody. When he left the sea, he must have brought away with him a large measure of the breezy air that curls and tips with white the waves of ocean; for he ever came to you "on a wind," until you could almost fancy that his hair was stirred with it, and that presently, when he sailed away, it would be with a fine breeze on the "port quarter," and with every stitch of canvas set to catch every, even the lightest puff of the sweet breath of heaven. Such was Clarkson Stanfield, a noble-hearted man, who had, in the days of his youth, passed through the breakers to cast anchor, in his later years, in the peaceful roadstead of honour, prosperity, and good fellowship. The house at Hampstead in which he lived for many years, "Green Hill," is now the local public library. It might have been put to a much worse use, have even fallen from its former estate (as so many dear old places do), into the decadence that knows no resurrection. Forster's regard for "Stanny," was returned in full by the object of it. The former's love for and appreciative knowledge of art, would alone have

contributed to establish friendly relations with the future R.A.; but when to this is added the beautiful nature of the man, it is not a matter for wonder that Forster like Dickens surrendered completely to a feeling which was irresistible. Forster records more than once, that he and Dickens paid surprise visits to Stanfield at Hampstead.

Dickens loved the Heath and its immediate neighbourhood, and Stanfield's living there was often the excuse with him for a "run over." There were so many things to consult the painter-friend about, connected with either some private theatrical performance, or with a projected jaunt, perhaps, such as the trip to Cornwall, immortalised in sketch and picture by Thackeray, Maclise, and Stanfield.

Towards the close of his life Stanfield had much worry, anxiety, and trouble, and then the two *great friends* would "scale the heights" in order to cheer and comfort their old comrade. He had become very pessimistic, and low-spirited, and welcomed only too gladly the visits of Forster and Boz.

Every one who knew him missed "Stanny" after he passed away in 1867, but no one more than Forster. He felt that one more link with the happy, irresponsible past, had snapped, and that it would be impossible to forge another in its place.

Stanfield's life was like to the wonderful blue of his skies—intense, with a depth in them, that led your gaze through and beyond the canvas into the very illimitability of space divine.

Like, too, so many of the great souls who circled round



Brook Green
Hammersmith

My dear Forster.

I shall calculate upon the pleasure of your company at dinner on Monday next at four o'clock unless I hear from you to the contrary. Dickens I think understood that he was expected. If you do not come with him. you had better leave an intimate line at our house, as Mother Bay is "elegiacly situate" opposite some almshouses at the corner

FACSIMILE OF A LETTER FROM JOHN LEECH TO JOHN FORSTER, PAGES 1 AND 2



FACSIMILE OF A LETTER FROM JOHN LEECH TO JOHN FORSTER. PAGES 3 AND 4

Dickens the sun, Clarkson Stanfield was, even as Dickens called him, the simplest of simple hearts. Not with the simplicity of the fool, but with that of the gentle, tender spirit, which knows no guile, that lives for others in that it knows not self.

Passing the other day, in sauntering mood, along the monotonous, uninteresting length of Brook Green, Hammersmith, I suddenly found myself within sight of Cornwall Road. There is nothing particularly exhilarating about the road in question, but it brought something, or rather, somebody, to my recollection, somebody who, in his day and generation, piped to a merry tune upon the public fancy, even as Hamlet might have done upon the "recorders" in his instructions to the players. There is still extant an undated letter of John Leech (the famous Victorian *Punch* artist), to Forster and Dickens conjointly, inviting them to dinner. Fearing that they might have a difficulty in locating his dwelling in Cornwall Road, to which he had but recently moved, he appended, at the end of his note, a sketch of the house, garden and the approach thereto, humorously indicating, by means of sundry arrows, notice boards, etc., the actual position of the place. The artists of that time were curiously given to this pictorial form of fun in their correspondence. Maclise, Sir Edwin Landseer, Stanfield, and many others—Thackeray for example—in writing to their intimates, more often than not *illustrated* their epistles. It was all part of the merry game, which in these more prosaic days seems to have been played quite out. W. P. Frith, R.A., who wrote a particularly entertaining life of Leech and his

work, tells the story of the famous Mulready envelope, and how perilously near it came to causing a serious breach in the friendship between John Leech and Mulready. Of course Mulready's scheme was all very absurd, alike in its inception and in its execution.

Leech, with his strong and instructive sense of the humorous, and innate faculty for seeing most things from a comical point of view, immediately set to work and produced a most clever parody of the eminent R.A.'s envelope.

It was a stroke of genius, but it so maddened Mulready that for some time he refused to meet his tormentor at dinner. Leech often signed his work with a bottle in which was a leech. Why this should have been a cause of offence to Mulready is a mystery, but so it was, and it was only through the good offices of Frith, that peace was restored. Leech was, both by "build of body," and by inclination an athlete and a sportsman. A fine horseman, he was never so happy as when riding to hounds. *Punch* has produced a great many hunting-men.

Of the older crowd, Tenniel, Leech, and a good round dozen more might be mentioned, while the most notable example in modern times was the late Linley Sambourne, whose prowess in the hunting-field was only exceeded by his reputation as a fine shot. Leech proved his dramatic ability when playing Matthew in *Every Man in His Humour*, Dickens himself speaking well of the performance. The Leech and Dickens families, and John Forster were very intimate, for several years passing their seaside holidays together; the two first,

that is, though Forster frequently joined them. Broadstairs was a favourite holiday-place, but after awhile Dickens grew tired of it, and the scene was changed.

What Dickens, and Forster also, thought of Leech's genius may be gathered from an illuminating criticism by the former of the *Punch* man's work. "Leech," Dickens was of opinion, "was the very first Englishman who had made beauty a part of his art." That, in a word, "he turned caricature into character. In all his designs, whatever he designed to do, he did." The great novelist closes a long and subtle criticism by asking: "Will no associate of the Royal Academy be found on its books one of these days, the labours of whose oil and brushes will have sunk into the profoundest obscurity when many pencil marks of John Leech will be still fresh in half the houses of the land?" Forster, himself a keen art critic, heartily endorses this judgment of his more famous friend. Leech, from an artistic point of view, made but one great mistake in his life. That was when he selected certain of his *Punch* sketches, treated them with thin washes of colour, and exhibited them publicly as an individual collection.

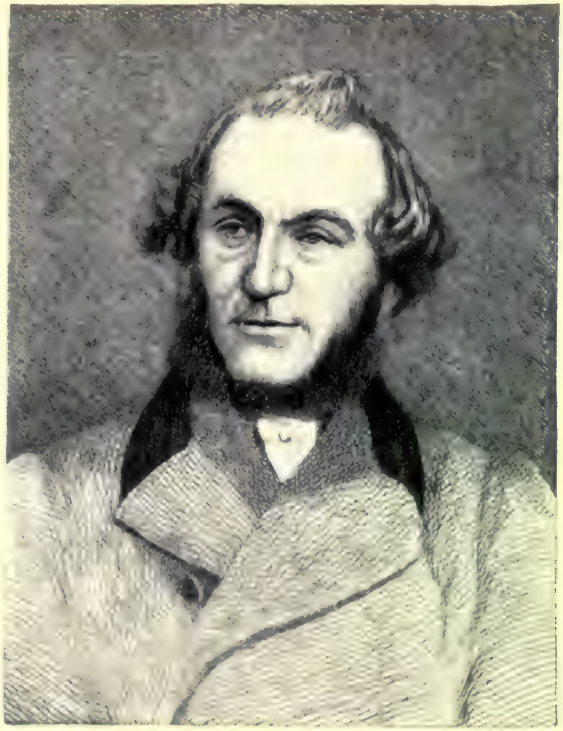
Commercially, it was a great success, Leech making a clear profit of £5,000 out of the venture. Artistically, it was a mistake, which he himself afterwards confessed.

He was in the flower of his manhood when he died—forty-five or six, I think—and was deeply mourned by all who had the privilege of his friendship. If Forster sorrowed much, greater still was the grief of Dickens at the sudden death (it was comparatively unexpected) of the brilliant *Punch* draughtsman.

What Dickens felt, may be inferred from a sentence in a letter to Forster. "The death of poor Leech," he wrote, "has put me out woefully." John Leech was the son of the proprietor of the London Coffee House, on Ludgate Hill, and was born in the now somewhat insalubrious neighbourhood of Stamford Street, Blackfriars—Bennett Street, to be precise. His father had a more than ordinary artistic taste, so that heredity may possibly have played no inconsiderable part in young Leech's future fame as a black-and-white artist. Art, however, was not to be his initial occupation, for at the outset he was articled to the medical profession, and for a time, I believe, "walked" St. Bartholomew's Hospital. The medical student in Albert Smith's *Adventures of Mr. Ledbury* owes much of its success as a characteristic portrait to the advice and suggestions of Leech.

He illustrated the book as he did *Christopher Tadpole.* He was a most industrious worker, and from his three or four thousand *Punch* sketches alone, netted £40,000. Add to this his enormous industry in book illustration, and it is easily understandable that he made much money.

It is certain—on record, indeed—that he was one of the rejected competitors for the position of illustrative artist on *The Pickwick Papers.* That may, or may not, have led to the establishing of a friendly footing with Dickens. If so, it is just possible that John Leech may have been largely responsible for the "painting in" of the portraits of Mr. Bob Sawyer and Mr. Benjamin Allen. It is only a passing suggestion,



JOHN LEECH

From an engraving



W. P. FRITH, R.A.

From a painting by Augustus Egg, R.A.

but I fancy I know of more outrageous ones in the history of literature.

Forster during his life had a large acquaintance with the leading lights of the theatrical profession. We know of his close and abiding friendship with Macready, and Macready was only one among many. In the later "thirties" there was playing in London, at the Haymarket and Covent Garden Theatres, a certain clever Irish comedian, one William Grattan Tyrone Power—professionally known as Tyrone Power—with whom, for a brief space, both Dickens and Forster were very intimate. Born in Ireland in 1797, he came of a good family, and was, we are told, a handsome, well-made man, of most engaging manners.

He was destined for a commercial life, but at the age of fourteen, soon after his arrival with his parents at Cardiff, fell in with a company of strollers, and threw in his lot with them. His first efforts, however, not proving successful, as a delineator of Irish character, he accepted an engagement as "walking gentleman" in a London theatre.

At nineteen he married, his wife being a year younger. How he earned his living during the next six years is unknown, for his London engagement turning out ill, he left the stage for that period, returning to it again, on a position being offered him at Covent Garden. Here, for a time, he played small Irish parts, but without making much headway. It was now that Forster and Dickens became acquainted with him, and there are several letters at South Kensington, all of them, curiously, inviting the friends to dine with him, I think at Putney.

Anyway, a very pleasant intimacy came about, which continued, and apparently increased, until 1841, when Power sailed for New York, to look after some of his American investments which had shown signs of "shakiness." His professional chance came at Covent Garden, with the sudden death of the principal Irish comedian.

He was given the dead man's part, and was at once an unqualified success. From that moment it was all "good fortune" with him. Eventually, he went to the Haymarket, and when the curtain was rung down on his final performance in 1841, announcement was made from the stage that after his return from his American trip, in 1842, he would reappear in a new farce of his own. He never trod the boards of the old Haymarket again! The s.s. *President*, in which he was a passenger from New York to Liverpool, foundered in mid-Atlantic with all hands. Every decade or so, the sea takes its toll of the stage—Power—Elton—Brooke—to name only three.

Forster and Dickens, who had bade the genial Irishman Good-bye! with a last word for a safe return, and who came to have quite an affectionate regard for their new actor-friend, looked forward with pleasant anticipation to a renewal of their intimacy. Then whisperings and rumours of something wrong began to be heard—and one morning people awoke to the knowledge of a terrible national disaster. The *President* had gone down, and with her, every one of the four hundred and more souls on board, not the least notable among them being that genuine Irish actor and gentleman, William Grattan Tyrone Power.

One of the most remarkable figures in the literary and social life of the time we are considering, and one, too, of John Forster's most valued friends, was John Noon Talfourd, man of letters, theatrical critic, journalist (as legal reporter on the *Times*, 1812), dramatist, and sometime justice of her Majesty's Court of Common Pleas. Forster himself has said, with regard to Talfourd, that the most constant and cordial intercourse existed between them.

Forster, as a member of the Bar (though he never practised), knew practically everybody of any note in the legal world, more especially if, as in Talfourd's case, the gentleman of the "long robe" chanced to have literary proclivities. Talfourd was, without doubt, a fairly clever lawyer, as lawyers go, but no one could say that he was exceptionally brilliant—a "legal light," in fact. He will most certainly go down in history as the author of *Ion*, not for any particular eminence as a judge of the High Court. Where a lawyer takes to "scribbling," you will generally find, that he is a literary man, or a journalist first, and a lawyer afterwards. Which, logically explained, means, that had the law been his "first love" (only fancy any sane person being "in love" with the law!), he would assuredly never have *descended* to literary pursuits. This is an awful truth, but still a truth, and will not bear gainsaying, although I might possibly be told (by a literary lawyer, or a legal-literary man), that the suggestion is nothing less than rank heresy. Well, then, we will take it, that Mr. Justice Talfourd was a better dramatist, critic and journalist, than he was a judge, which is not to say that

he was a bad judge, but only that he was not so good in his legal capacity as he was in his literary. It is curious, that, before he was elevated to the bench, he conducted, what at first seemed would be, the great piracy case in connection with Dickens's copyrights in the *Christmas Carol* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*, and that the great opportunity for his distinguishing himself by his knowledge of the literary world, and its ways and customs, should have incontinently vanished into thin air, owing to the "giving in" of the defendant. It is said that Talfourd nearly wept with disappointment at being unable to "create an impression," for in spite of his kindly spirit, and lovable disposition, he was a very vain man, and one who could not bear to take "second place," where he imagined he ought to be "Number One." On his elevation, everybody was delighted (Dickens was "enraptured"), and no one more so than Forster, who, bearing out my own previously expressed contention, says: "Talfourd assumed nothing with the ermine but the privilege of more frequent intercourse with the tastes and friends he loved, and he continued to be the most joyous and least affected of companions." Take, for instance, his delightful sense of enjoyment at the "*Clock*" (*Master Humphrey's Clock*), dinner, at which he presided, on the evening of April the 10th, 1841, eight years before his assumption of the judicial dignity. The greatest good-humour and jollity prevailed, "Talfourd," as Forster says, "proposing the *Clock*, Macready Mrs. Dickens, Dickens the publishers, and myself the artists; Macready, in addition, giving Talfourd, Talfourd Macready, Dickens myself, and

myself the comedian, Mr. Harley, whose humorous songs had been no inconsiderable element in the mirth of the evening."

Talfourd was a valued member of the Shakespeare Society, founded by Dickens and Forster. They met, disputed, dined together, though I cannot find any minutes which record any discussion on the Shakespeare *versus* Bacon controversy. Perhaps this particular form of literary madness had not in those days made any sign, or developed intentions. I have an idea that this same Shakespeare Society owed its existence to the visits to Stratford-on-Avon, an opinion which is endorsed by one or two old Stratfordians, who remember Forster, Dickens, and the rest during their expedition to the birthplace in 1852, if not in '47. But however it was, it is clear that this circle of clever men (whether with serious intent or merely as an excuse for merrily meeting together, it is now impossible to say), did really so establish a Society bearing the name of Shakespeare, and that they did meet periodically for discussion, disputation or—mastication.

Evidently the club did not consume much of their time and attention, for its existence is only mentioned once by Forster in the *Life*.

Talfourd's tragedy of *Ion* was produced by Macready —who had a great opinion of the author's literary and dramatic genius—at Covent Garden, May the 26th, 1836. Its success was instantaneous and great. It became the fashion, although that is no reliable criterion of merit. It "took the town," as they phrased it in those days, and this, from the author's and the producer's point of

view, was all that was necessary. Both as a writer and as a speaker Talfourd was very diffuse; in plain English, wordy. His characters talked and soliloquised by the yard, even as their creator orated and speechified. *Ion* was successful, because of its exceptionally good and original plot, not by reason of its fine language and emotional treatment. For a time its success completely turned Talfourd's head, so that his vanity and jealousy became almost unbearable. To attempt in any way to criticise his tragedy, was at once to let loose within him the "green-eyed monster" in all his native monstrosity. He never quite lost this unfortunate tendency to value his tragedy as being something infinitely superior to anything ever produced by even Shakespeare himself.

It was all very laughable, of course, but then Talfourd was so good-tempered (except in this one particular), so full of the milk of human kindness, that it was impossible to quarrel with him. Bulwer Lytton had not only an enthusiastic admiration for his genius, but a great and sincere regard for him as a friend—so much so that he dedicated *The Lady of Lyons* to him when it was published in book form in 1839.

Two years before this, Talfourd himself had published, in several volumes, *The Letters, etc., of Charles Lamb*, eleven years later (1848), bringing out a revised and more complete edition, containing further letters and notes of the "gentle Elia."

Talfourd's successful labours on the compilation of these volumes, will always, I should say, entitle him to a high place in the world of letters, as a man of sound

judgment, painstaking to a fault, and of unquestionably wise discretion. His was the great advantage of having known Lamb personally, a valuable asset in the undertaking of such an important task. Forster thought very highly of his work in this connection, and commendation from so accomplished a critic, one, too, whose knowledge of most things belonging to the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, was alike wide and deep, would be calculated to give even so vain a person as Talfourd as much satisfaction as pleasure. But then Forster knew his friend's worth, intellectually, and morally.

He knew also that for such a work as the editing of Lamb's letters, no more fitting hand could have been chosen. That he did it well, we not only have Forster's word, but the pregnant fact, that the result of it lives to-day, and will continue so to do as long as English literature itself, to which it is so splendid a commentary, is alive in our midst.

One of the Dickens circle, and, therefore, *per se*, a friend of Forster's, was Samuel Laman Blanchard (known to all men as Laman Blanchard), a journalist of no mean gifts, a man of unequal mental balance, keenly susceptible to outside influence, and of a decidedly emotional temperament.

Forster first met him when both were on the *True Sun*, and they were fellow-workers for more than four years on the *Examiner*, from '41 to '45, Forster during these years being editor-in-chief of the latter paper. It does not appear that there was ever any friction between them, on the contrary, Blanchard remained

with, and worked under Forster till his own death by his own hand in 1845. The sudden loss of his wife was the primary cause of the rash act, added to strain from overwork. He was a most industrious man, doing much literary work in the interests of a busy journalistic life. In spite of his close professional connection with Forster, his friendship with Douglas Jerrold was of a far more intimate character, he acting as godfather to Jerrold's son.

Still, he belonged, as it were, to the "set," and being a man of strong individuality, held his own in it fairly well. If for no other reason than his loyal belief in, and firm friendship for L. E. L., his intimacy with Forster would be interesting. He wrote a life, or memoir rather, of the unhappy young poetess, in which he warmly defends her memory from the cruel attacks made upon her both in her lifetime and after her mysterious death in Africa. In thus constituting himself the unfortunate young lady's champion, he showed himself to be a man of rare courage, for in his fight for the right, as he undoubtedly believed it to be, he was literally "one against the world." Forster's name does not once occur throughout the book, as how could it, considering the delicacy of the case. It is a strange, and certainly a sad coincidence, that both Letitia Elizabeth Landon, and the man who stood up in her defence against a cruelly censorious world, should both of them have come to a violent end. One by his own hand and the other—well—no man knoweth, to this day.

There was another friend of Forster's, a dear friend, whom he does not even mention in the *Life*, although

the individual in question mixed with, and was well-known to Dickens, and most of the circle. John Henry Foley, R.A., as a sculptor was not in the front rank, perhaps, but he achieved some things which entitle him to be called a great artist. Forster had a most affectionate regard for him. He possessed one especial virtue which, more than any other, would appeal to Forster's own nature, *viz.* conscientiousness in his art No detail was too small, no trouble too great, the one being laboriously thought out, developed, and expressed, the other given without stint or complaint. He was, too, a man of imagination.

Witness his *Oliver Goldsmith*, which obviously was inspired by Forster's wonderful biography. Then again, what a splendid piece of work is the equestrian figure of Outram, the rider half turning in his saddle to look behind him. The pose is unique—it certainly is a veritable trumpet-note in bronze, full of life and power. Like his friend, a most industrious worker; it is not, perhaps, to be wondered at, that his name does not appear in any of the lists of those happy, convivial meetings, which, as I have before stated, Forster has been so unjustly accused of not duly recording. Foley had no use for junketings, merry-makings, or Bohemian festivities of any kind (as they were then understood). During the greater number of the hours out of the twenty-four, he might have been found in his studio, plodding, improving and again improving. Forster often visited him there, for in many respects they were kindred spirits. I saw him once in the studio of Felix M. Miller, a pupil of his, and subsequently Head of

the School of Sculpture at South Kensington. Miller was great at bas-relief subjects from the poets.

One I well remember. It was from the *White Doe of Rylstone* of Wordsworth, and was really beautiful both in conception and execution. Felix Miller was a very dear friend of my parents, and gave them a replica of the *White Doe*, which I can recollect as hanging in the drawing-room. Talking of South Kensington reminds me of Patrick Nasmyth, the artist's brother who, when the Museum was housed in the "Brompton Boilers" (as they were derisively called), was curator of what was then the "Patent Museum." He was not connected in any way with Forster, my only excuse for mentioning him here being something which occurred some time in 1857 when visiting the "Boilers," with my father, who was a friend of Nasmyth's. In the course of conversation between the two, about nothing in particular, Nasmyth, I remember, suddenly changed the subject of their talk, and said, "What's all this about Charles Dickens and his friend John Forster, that Cole is so full of just now?" Sir Henry, then Mr. Cole, was the moving spirit at the new Science and Art Museum and Schools at South Kensington, and a great friend of Forster's. "They, and a number of like-minded lunatics, are, I hear, strolling up and down the country, giving performances for the benefit of I don't believe they really know what—a Mrs. Caudle somebody says it's for. Mark my words!" he wound up, with the emphatic energy of the typical irate Scot (I take leave to soften the brogue). "They'll do no good; they'll just toomble through trying to soop their

parritch too hot." As a matter of fact, Forster, owing to illness, did not go into the provinces with his friends.

As Forster subsequently became connected with the Lunacy Commission, first as secretary and later as a Commissioner, it is quite in order that I should refer briefly to the Earl of Shaftesbury; the "Good Earl," as he afterwards came to be, and is still called. He was chairman of the Commission, and as such, was well known, of course, to Forster. But long before his first appointment he and Forster had met at Dickens's table, when Lord Shaftesbury (then Lord Ashley) first dined with the novelist at Tavistock House. Most people are aware, that this nobleman professed strong views and opinions on religion, and religious matters generally.

But even those who might be opposed to him with regard to the theoretical side of the subject, had nothing but admiration and respect for him as a practical philanthropist, as a high-souled, honest-hearted man, who lived his convictions, and spent himself, and his substance, in the service of those who, from force of circumstances, were powerless to right the wrongs by which they suffered. Both Dickens and Forster would, and did, appreciate such a character, and although the pathways of life, with one, at least, led in a different direction to that of the other two, it would assuredly meet at the end of the journey. The terminus of the three travellers was the same—it was a matter of different routes—that was all. The friendly relations existing for many years between the earl and Forster were proof-sufficient that each of them knew the mind of the other on the one great question.

Their methods and media were different, but I have good reason to believe that they were in perfect accord on the real issue. With regard to Dickens, may we not, for instance, strain a point and imagine that Lord Shaftesbury, in thinking out his scheme for a Ragged School, male and female shelters, and a hundred other means of help for the neighbourhood of Field Lane, Clerkenwell, may well have been inspired by the vivid description by Dickens of the dens, and worse, of that awful district, with its population of Fagins, Sikes', Artful Dodgers, and Nancys living the life unspeakable ? It is only a fancy—there is no chapter-and-verse warrant for it—but it is just possible. Anyway, the work initiated nearly fifty years ago by the " Good Earl," is to-day still going on—and growing.

One thing alone would rejoice the heart of the " Great Apostle of Christmas " were he alive to-day, and that is the dinner given every 25th of December to close upon a thousand homeless, hungry outcasts in the great Mission Hall of the Field Lane Refuge. How his eyes would glisten, as he would look upon the marvellous transformation of *The Three Cripples* public-house, with Noah Claypole and Charlotte undergoing cross-examination at the hands of Fagin ! Well, if it be fancy only, and the " Good Earl " did not even read *Oliver Twist*, the result is the same. That which Dickens hoped for, and strove, by a terrible picture of the truth, to induce men to do, *Lord Shaftesbury did.* His mind, and that of Dickens, working in different ways, accomplished the same end.

Lord Shaftesbury was the friend of John Forster, and Charles Dickens—I need say no more.

Another peer, Monckton Milnes, first Baron Houghton, also closely intimate with Forster, was a man of a very different type to Lord Shaftesbury. Poet, man of letters, and cultured exceedingly, Monckton Milnes was a notable figure in the world of Literature and Art during the period of his friendship with the principal members of the Dickens circle. His influence upon the literature of his time was considerable, and although the greater lights naturally resented anything in the shape of patronage, or encouragement in the guise of condescension, the lesser fry could not afford to be so squeamish, and as usual took all the advice and criticism offered them, with as good a grace as may be, and without doubt were, themselves and their work, much the better for the operation.

Lord Houghton was one of those men whose existence for the well-being of literature is at all times eminently necessary, even if they should make an occasional mistake, which, being mortal, they may always be expected to do. Lord Houghton made fewer mistakes than most men in the circumstances would have done.

Forster has told how bitterly Dickens inveighed against "charitable patronage" with regard to the unfortunate literary man who has fallen on evil days.

Anything, he considered, which lowered the self-respect of those in dire straits (through ill-fortune only, and not through any fault of their own), was absolutely and wholly bad in principle and in application. Lord

Houghton, who was on the Committee, if he was not a Trustee, of the Royal Literary Fund, argued otherwise, hence, on this one question he and Dickens were at issue. What Forster's real opinions were on the subject it is difficult at this time to determine. My own idea being, that he had no particular sympathy with the unsuccessful person in any case, which position enabled him to maintain a pleasant neutrality as towards both his friends. There are at South Kensington, among the Forster MSS., a couple of short notes from John Howard Payne to the donor of the collection. In themselves they are not important, but as coming from the author of *Home, Sweet Home*, are peculiarly interesting. The term "friend" can hardly be applied to Payne in connection with Forster, for these two letters of his, of but a line or two each, are all that we have to prove that the two men were ever in communication. And yet, not to have included Payne in this summary of those who, more or less, had, at some time or another during Forster's life, come into touch with him, would have proved the present writer guilty of an unpardonable omission. *Home, Sweet Home*, written by a man who never knew the comforts and privileges of a home, (a restless being, with no place in which to set up his household gods), is, for that very reason, one of the saddest of lyrics, and its author the most sorrowful of human shadows, as he flits faintly across the page of literary history.

I am not sure that Forster ever really met him, but these two simple notes of his surely entitle him to the niche in which I have placed him, as one who sang a

song which has touched more hearts, perhaps, the world over, than any other that has ever been written.

I have a very hazy recollection of being taken as a youngster to Albert Smith's unique little show, *Mont Blanc*, at the old Egyptian Hall in Piccadilly.

Both Dickens and Forster had a very warm regard for the genial and witty platform-guide to the "*Ups* and *Downs*" of Switzerland as she is (or is not) "clomb."

Albert Smith was one of the most versatile of human beings. Traveller, lecturer, novelist, playwright, journalist, he was easily lecturer first, and everything else second, third and so on. And yet, there was scarcely anything to which he put his hand, that was not more or less well done. Of his books, *Christopher Tadpole*, is I think the best, although its greatest admirers cannot but admit that it is, after all, a colourable imitation of Dickens. It was a great favourite with me, as a boy, I remember, and I fancy I could even now read it with genuine, if reminiscent pleasure.

Albert Smith's great attraction was his buoyant, happy spirit, his careless, irresponsible nature, and his keen enjoyment of that Bohemian side of the life of his day, of which Dickens and his friends made the very most, and of which, in this twentieth century, there does not exist even the merest shred. There is a strong impression abroad in these "very much improved" times, that the "life" referred to was improper, demoralising, coarse, and desperately wicked. Hearts were, perhaps, warmer in those wicked days, than in the world of literature and art they are to-day. There is but little of that kindly associative feeling (except in the

very rarest of instances); that heart-born clannishness which distinguished the big-souled brotherhoods of pen and pencil in the days when Pickwick flashed upon the world. And of all that happy, single-hearted company, there was none happier, more light-hearted, more generous-minded, than Albert Smith, the man of *Mont Blanc*. When he married a daughter of the Keeleys', his friendly relations with Forster, and the rest of the Dickens set, became closer and more intimate. In 1846 he dramatised Dickens's current Christmas story, *The Battle of Life*, for his parents-in-law. It was produced at the Lyceum with "Bob" Keeley and his clever wife in the two principal parts. As to its success, or otherwise, little can now be said, but it probably had the usual "run" of most of the dramatic versions of that time at the Adelphi, under the Yates management. Smith, like Dickens, was passionately fond of dogs. In 1852, or thereabouts, he gave the latter a puppy of the great St. Bernard he had brought from Switzerland. Dickens christened his canine gift Linda, and the lady eventually developed into a magnificent specimen of her breed. Arthur Smith, who managed the earlier readings of Dickens, was a brother of Albert's. Dickens had a succession of such managers, Arthur Smith, Mr. Headland, some one else, I cannot remember, and George Dolby, of whom the last-named was probably the most suited to the very exceptional nature of the work involved. Poor Albert Smith died a comparatively young man—worn out with the ill-health born of an over-taxed constitution. One other side of Albert Smith's multi-faceted nature ought

not to be left unrecorded. With all his energy, excitability, and restlessness, he had a simplicity of soul, than which nothing was more beautiful and lovable, and it is, I know, for this very trait in his character, that John Forster, not the least exacting of men, held him in such affectionate regard.

Forster was intimate with many statesmen and men of affairs: Gladstone, the Earl of Carlisle, Lord Stanhope, and the Rt. Hon. Milner Gibson; all of whom held him in the highest esteem.

Mrs. Forster also, when Mrs. Colburn, was on especially friendly terms with Lord Beaconsfield, then Mr. Disraeli, whom Forster positively hated, "Dizzy" being a familiar figure at her receptions in Bryanston Square. In going through the Forster MSS. I came across several letters of the statesman-novelist to Mrs. Colburn, written in his customary courtly fashion. From their tenor it is easy to see that he had a great admiration for Henry Colburn's clever wife; and Disraeli never praised without the very best of good reasons. Lord Carlisle, as Chairman of the Sanitary Commission, came into special touch with Forster. Dickens was a powerful pleader for a better condition of things, with regard to the housing of the poorer classes. It was his interest in the working of this Commission which led to his acquaintance with Lord Ashley, with whom the betterment of the poor was more than a hobby—an overmastering obsession. Lord Carlisle was present at the "Guild" performance at Newcastle, where, into the only room they could secure, they managed to squeeze six hundred people.

Forster relates that Lord Carlisle was particularly amusing one evening in Devonshire Terrace. "He told what 'the good old Brougham' had said to him of 'those *Punch* people,' expressing what was really his fixed belief. 'They never get my face, and are obliged to put up with my plaid trousers!'"

Of Forster's acquaintance with Lord Stanhope, very little is known. Indeed, I only mentioned it for the interesting reason that Dickens and Forster dined with Lord Stanhope in the middle of May, 1870, where he met Disraeli. This would have been Dickens's last social function, but that, at the last moment, and at great risk to himself, he decided to dine at Lord Houghton's, to meet the King of the Belgians and the Prince of Wales. Forster accompanied him, and so came to an end both the play- and the work-time.

But of all these peers and Parliament people, Milner Gibson came nearest to being Forster's greatest friend. Dickens, too, knew and liked him. I have an idea that, as a statesman, Milner Gibson was not a "big success." He was what is known in Government circles as a "safe" man—one of the "useful" and reliable kind. Such men are necessary, in the present state of our party system, and are rewarded accordingly. But socially, Gibson was a most estimable and kindly gentleman, just the sort of person you would imagine John Forster would delight to honour. They would be likely to agree, because the essential part of Milner Gibson's political creed was, to keep friends by making no enemies.

Forster's friendship with Francis, Lord Jeffrey, was

more of an epistolary, than of a personal nature. Jeffrey, the terrible critic, and editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, and John Forster, the occupier of the *Examiner* throne, and a dramatic critic whose verdicts were rarely or ever questioned, were fitted for their respective positions in precisely the same way. They were both absolutely fearless, never cringed to power, or in any one known instance surrendered to systematic intimidation. It was Jeffrey who, in the *Review*, "cut up" Byron to such deadly purpose, that the poet never forgave him.

Forster, it is said, endorsed Jeffrey's opinion, as he would be most likely to do, for although he might, and did pay homage to the *form* in which Byron expressed his poetic imaginings, he vigorously denounced the subject-matter of his verse in no measured terms. Jeffrey was no longer young when Forster became acquainted with him. His work was then practically done. Judgment by professional criticism was gradually giving way before public opinion. Criticism of course continued—will continue to the end of all things, but it was no longer a power, to which men deferred as to an infallible Sir Oracle. The public had at length learned to judge for itself on literary, if not on artistic matters. It declined any longer to be "led by the nose" by the critics, or at least by critics of the old cut-and-thrust, despotic school, of which Jeffrey was the one-time chief, and then (except, perhaps, Wilson) sole remaining representative. To this same school Forster himself undoubtedly originally belonged, as any one who will take the trouble to read some of his

True Sun and *Examiner* criticisms will readily see. But he was, in a way, adapting himself to the new order of things, which Jeffrey was too old to do. With regard to Dickens, Jeffrey constituted himself the great English novelist's "critic laureate." Little Nell so overcame him, that he went about talking to anybody and everybody of Dickens's wonderful creation. *Dombey* he considered to be the most "finished" of all the books, and that it "equalled the best in the delicacy and fineness of its touches." Of Forster's historical studies, as of his biographic faculty, his good opinion was unqualified and definite.

As a friend he was most affectionate and devoted. Dickens, in his tribute to his memory, on his death in January, 1850, in a letter to Forster, says: "I say nothing of his wonderful abilities and great career; and though no man could wish to live and die more happily, so old in years, and yet so young in faculties and sympathies, I am very deeply grieved for his loss." Forster himself says: "Jeffrey had completed with consummate success, if ever man did, the work appointed him in this world; and few, after a life of such activities, have left a memory so unstained and pure." To have had this last said of him has fallen to the lot of but few critics, either of the old school or the new.

Maclise and Frith have already been mentioned among the greater of Forster's friendships in the world of art. There remain two other artists, who, for many reasons, have no inconsiderable claim to be included amongst those friends of Forster's, who so largely contributed to make his life the happy, pleasant thing

it, in the main, really was. These were Augustus Egg, R.A., and Frank Stone, A.R.A. It was in 1847, on the occasion of the amateur dramatic performances by Dickens and his friends on behalf of Leigh Hunt, that these two fine artists, and clever men generally, entered, to all intents and purposes, into the magic Dickens-Forster circle. It is curious to note how the two painters walk "arm-in-arm" as it were through the period of their friendship with Forster.

Egg and Frank Stone (to distinguish the latter from Marcus of that ilk), like an artistic Tweedledum and Tweedledee, are the "heavenly twins" of ten years at least of Forster's life. Egg, at a time when English art was, what Dickens described as "wanting in character, fire, purpose, and the power of using the vehicle and the model as mere means to an end," was a painter of *genre* pictures of such merit, that some of them have a more or less high value and reputation even to-day, when the auction-room is the only place where masters new and old find their real market level. Frank Stone comes into the Forster story a little earlier, perhaps, than Egg, about 1839 in fact, though from 1847 onward, for a space of about ten years, they are found nearly always in conjunction. In all the amateur performances organised by Dickens, the artistic pair are to be found lending their services, both in the scene-painting room, and histrionically. It was the same in the play hour.

At Brighton, Broadstairs, and elsewhere, the inevitable Egg and Stone, in zodiacal combination, appeared in due course, and contributed to the general enjoyment,

as well as looked after their own. Frank Stone dropped out of this pleasant little comedy in 1859, on the 18th of November of which year he died, rather suddenly. His death was a great grief to Forster, as also it was to Dickens, who though he might criticise the artist, really loved the man. Egg and Collins (Wilkie), *vice* Stone, superseded. It would almost seem as though Egg could not comfortably exist without a companion.

Just as the two brother artists were aforetime, so, just before and during 1853, you will find the bereaved R.A. and the author of *The Woman in White*. Here, there and everywhere are they to be found together. When Dickens's famous journey through Switzerland and Italy was planned, who but Egg and Collins must be of the party ! For a brief space it was an open question whether the notable twain, or, at least, one of them, would survive to tread Italia's classic soil. The scene of that which might have been a tragedy, was the fateful Mer de Glace.

They were, it appears, at an immense height, upon a narrow ledge, like a chimney-piece, while, a sheer 1000 feet or more below, was a frightful crevasse or ravine. "Presently," says Forster, "without any warning, there came rolling down from the towering heights above, a block of stone, about the size of one of the fountains in Trafalgar Square, which Egg, the last of the party, had preceded by not a yard, when it swept over the ledge, and, uprooting a tree, rolled, leapt, and tumbled down into the valley."

It would seem that, after the return from Italy, Egg must have "sported his oak," and buried himself in

his studio, for there is no more mention of him either by, or anywhere in connection with, Forster. The literary men and artists of this particular period, appeared somehow—as though tired of their Bohemianism, or that it had been too much for them—to " shrink into their shells " towards the end of their individual careers, in most cases writing " Finis " to everything on the right side of sixty, or, very rarely, sixty-five. Edwin Landseer, although on friendly terms with both Dickens and Forster; eating an occasional dinner with one or either of them, and so forth; was not, as might have been expected of a lover and painter of animals (especially dogs and horses), of a companionable nature. There was much of the recluse about him, as there was about Turner, and you had, as it were, to " dig him out " to gain converse with him. Of his brother Charles, I know nothing, nor do I think he was in any way intimate with Forster, or any of his friends. The same cannot be said of Marcus Stone, R.A., for although his name does not appear very often, either in correspondence, or other records, he was certainly very intimate with Dickens, and by consequence, with Forster also. He illustrated *Our Mutual Friend*, *American Notes*, *Pictures from Italy*, and *Great Expectations*, but he only comes into the Forster story shortly prior to 1864, having had little or no connection with the old, and now rapidly-vanishing Dickens circle; the true golden-time of the glorious " forties " and " fifties."

Never lived there yet a man, in a position like to Forster's, who attracted to himself so great a cloud of friends and acquaintances. Not often was his experi-

ence in this connection a sad and sorrowful one. One such there was, however, which for long distressed him beyond measure. Some time before the matter of the acquisition of Shakespeare's birthplace, Allan Cunningham's son Peter came into touch with Forster, who developed a great liking for him, more especially as he was a close student with regard to the lives of eminent authors, artists, and other notable persons who flourished during the two preceding centuries. Not only had he a knowledge of their works, but he had also a keen interest in their haunts, happenings, and social influence, which he had made the subject of minute and novel inquiry. This tendency of Peter Cunningham's mind, intensified the interest Forster took in the young Scotsman, until from mere acquaintances they became fast friends. As we have seen in the chapter on Stratford-on-Avon, they were intimately associated in the organising of the scheme for inducing the Government of the day to assist in the purchase of Shakespeare's birthplace, it only remains to say a few words as to the man, Peter Cunningham himself. Not only Forster and Dickens, but their many friends liked him exceedingly. His presence was ever welcome to all and sundry, for the great reason, probably, among many others, that his eager enjoyment of life—social life—was so contagious that something at least of it could not but be shared by those with whom he came in contact. But it was not alone his geniality which effected all this, it was his accomplishments, and wealth of general information. This "store of knowledge," says Forster, "gave substance to his conversation, yet never inter-

rupted his buoyancy and pleasantry, because only introduced when called for, and not made matter of parade or display. A favourite companion, the very qualities that won him many friends, proved in the end his undoing.

"While young, he had done much in certain lines of research and investigation, which he had made practically his own. There was every promise, therefore, that with added years and experience he would eventually have produced much more important literary and biographical work. This, however, was not to be. The fascinations of good fellowship encroached more and more upon his literary pursuits, until he nearly abandoned his former favourite studies, and sacrificed all the deeper purposes of his life to the present temptations of a festive hour." His health then giving way, the inevitable happened, and his friends, as well as literature, lost sight of him altogether. But the memory of his bright and happy personality remained, and "his old associates never ceased to think of Peter Cunningham with both regret and kindness." Forster, more than any other, than Dickens even, grieved over the self-wrecking of a life which promised so much, and though he afterwards seldom or ever mentioned his name, did not cast him altogether out of his heart, but ever kept a corner, swept and garnished for the day that might, perhaps, see him come back, in his right mind.

Big, jolly, a very mountain of child-pleasing fun; christened by the "young 'uns" (as he always called them) "Uncle Mark," the laughter-making, laughter-

loving Lord of Misrule, Mark Lemon, was the first editor of *Punch*. Before, however, donning the mantle literary and editorial the genial Mark played the part of host in his own inn. It was in Drury Lane, I believe, now being rapidly improved off the Metropolitan map. Nell Gwynne, my Lord Craven, (beloved, tradition has it, of the widowed Princess Palatine, daughter of James the First), or Dick Swiveller, could they but revisit "the glimpses of the moon," would assuredly fail to recognise their old haunts, given over as they are to the tender mercies of the L. C. C. Lemon soon gravitated into the Dickens set. Forster early became acquainted with him, and though, perhaps, the ponderous Mark, the modern Falstaff, often, with his coarse-flavoured, "rough-and-tumble" wit, grated on the finer susceptibilities of Forster, on the whole the latter liked the mighty man, and through a long friendship learned to appreciate, and even to love him. For Mark Lemon commanded affection. The "happy-go-lucky" days of his reign in Bouverie Street testified to this—so different were they to the disciplinary period under the rule of Frank Burnand. Mark was always in request among his friends, when anything festive was in contemplation. In another sense, than that of his old Drury Lane days, he was ever a host in himself.

He took part in most of the amateur performances organised at various times by Dickens. At children's parties particularly he was the one thing needful.

Did his friends go for their annual holiday, Mark Lemon must come too.

In the rides on horseback Dickens and Forster used to take he was a frequent participant. As a writer of plays he dramatised the Christmas story, *The Haunted Man*, at Dickens's own request. He died in May, 1870, barely three weeks before his friend Charles Dickens. The last time that Forster and Dickens ever met—Sunday, the 22nd of May—the latter was very depressed and sorrowful, having only that morning heard of Lemon's death. "It led his thoughts," says Forster, "to the crowd of friendly companions in letters and art, who had so fallen from the ranks since we played Ben Jonson together that we were left almost alone. 'And none beyond his sixtieth year,' he sadly commented, 'very few even fifty.' It is no good to talk of it, I suggested. 'We shall not think of it the less,' was his reply."

There does not seem to have been any very great intimacy (whether, in fact, they had any personal knowledge whatever of each other) between Forster and George Cruikshank until after the publication, in 1836, of *Sketches by Boz*, with cuts by Cruikshank. The famous Victorian artist was, of course, then only on the threshold of his great reputation. Prolific as he was, all through his life, it was the work he did in illustrating Dickens and Harrison Ainsworth that placed him at the "top of the tree."

Cruikshank was an impulsive, hot-headed and very opinionative man, but "Genial George" as he was

familiarly called by his intimates, could, when he pleased, be everything that the name implies. Dickens had a great admiration for Cruikshanks's work. Writing to Forster in 1847, he praises, with unqualified generosity, the artist's " Bottle " series, then just published.

" Very powerful indeed ! I question whether anybody else living could have done it so well . . . as good as Hogarth." But while enthusiastically approving the wonderful—indeed, Hogarthian fidelity of the drawings, down to the merest detail, he was of opinion, that, as he says in the same letter to Forster, " As a great lesson I think it all wrong; because to be striking, and original too, the drinking should have begun in sorrow, or poverty, or ignorance—the three things in which, in its awful aspect, it *does* begin. The design would then have been a double-handed sword—but too ' radical ' for good old George, I suppose." This is the very kindliest of kindly criticism, only to be expected of one who was the soul of kindness. With reference to the *Oliver Twist* " inspiration " fable, Forster it was who was righteously angry—and naturally so, for his friend's sake. He was always particularly jealous where that friend's honour was in question, and as, after a most generous appreciation of Cruikshank by Dickens, under date 1848, he, Forster, makes no further mention of the artist's name, one is driven to the conclusion, that he never quite forgave the latter's action in the *Oliver Twist* matter. Then again, Cruikshank was not, what the ordinary person would term, Forster's " sort." The latter always demanded, expected, and,

save in exceptional cases, usually exacted a certain amount of deference, which I don't think he would ever receive from Cruikshank.

Indeed, that very independent gentleman would be far more likely to ridicule such an autocratic assumption on Forster's part, on the principle that Jack was quite as good as, perhaps better than his master. To put it plainly, Forster, and the fiery, untameable artist, were like to oil and water, inasmuch as they could never, by any possibility, of nature or of anything else, have mixed successfully, or to any good purpose.

Albany Fonblanque, proprietor, and for some time editor of the *Examiner*, was in a different category to most of the other friends of Forster dealt with in this chapter. He was, if I may so put it, Forster's own especial friend. Together for so many years on the *Examiner*, it was only to be expected, that, given mutual compatibility of mind and disposition (which with Fonblanque and Forster happened to be the case), a close and intimate friendship would naturally be the result. " My dear friend, Albany Fonblanque," Forster calls the other, " as keen and clear a judge as ever lived, either of books or men." This is daring praise for any human being, but from all I have heard and read of the subject of it, it is plain to me that the eulogy is not extravagant, and certainly was entirely deserved. The wit of Fonblanque as a political writer, and the delightful union of sound judgment with enthusiasm in Forster's criticism upon literature and the drama, not only kept

the *Examiner* up to high-water mark, but raised it to a first place among the weekly newspapers of London. To Fonblanque and Forster alike, literature came rightly home as an essential part of life, and keen relish of the wit of the past quickened their powers of appreciation for that which lay about and around them. When, having already acquired from Dr. Fellowes all proprietary rights in the paper, Fonblanque, in 1847, resigned into Forster's hands his own work as editor-in-chief of the *Examiner*, he had every confidence that his friend would, even single-handed, more than maintain the standard they had together succeeded in setting up. This confidence was not in any way falsified or misplaced, for throughout all the years of Forster's management, the paper was conspicuous for the swiftness and decision with which it called attention to a new book, a new play, or a new actor, that gave signs of a true power. Fonblanque still took a strong interest in the well-being of the paper, contributing weekly to its columns. For nine years Forster had sole and absolute control over it, and only resigned his editorial position in 1855, on his appointment as secretary to the Lunacy Commission.

His old friend Fonblanque, to whom, as proprietor of the *Examiner*, he announced the close of their business relations, wrote to him—

"I apprehended the nature of your communication, and opened your note with misgivings.

"I cannot deny the wisdom of your determination, though . . . the straightforwardness, the kindness, the

frankness, make it only the more unacceptable to me. You may see by the erasures that my eyes and hand are not very true and steady, and in truth I write with a heavy heart. . . . We have been connected now for twenty-three years, and have never had a difference beyond opinion—seldom that—never unfriendly. Be your successor who he may, he can never fill your place. I feel that my moorings are lifted." From that time onward, for ten years, Fonblanque contributed as many political articles to the paper as would make four columns. Henry Morley was Forster's successor, editing the paper for the ten years above mentioned. As for the friendship of Forster and Fonblanque, it continued, unbroken, to the end.

In common justice to the memory of two good men and true, Forster's friendly relations with the two original members of the publishing house of Messrs. Chapman and Hall, viz. Mr. William Hall, and Mr. Edward Chapman, should have especial mention in these pages. "I was not aware," wrote the senior partner of the new firm to Dickens, in 1836, "that you were writing in the *Chronicle*, or what your name was." This is part of the letter (which seems strange reading now, in the light of Charles Dickens's proved immortality), in which the historic offer is made to Dickens to do *Pickwick*. Although Mr. Edward Chapman wrote the letter, it was the junior partner, Mr. William Hall, who carried the application to Furnival's Inn. Mr. Hall it was who had sold Dickens, two years before, not knowing that he was the purchaser, the magazine

in which his first copy was printed. Mr. Hall died in 1847, and Dickens attended his funeral, but I am almost sure Forster did not, as he at that time had his hands more than full, being in the first flush of his editorship of the *Examiner*. Hall had his home at Norwood, where Forster, as well as Dickens and his wife visited. Edward Chapman was often of the party, which, with the addition of Mrs. Hall and her sister, was quite a large and a merry one. In August 1841, Dickens writes to Forster: "A letter has come from little Hall, begging that when I *do* come to town I will dine there, . . . have written to say I will do so on Saturday, and we will go together." These pleasant reunions were of frequent repetition, and Forster always enjoyed them. Another letter of the 23rd of the same month has in it a significant expression of opinion with regard to the characteristics of the two partners.

"I thought Chapman," says Dickens, "very manly and sensible, Hall morally and physically feeble, though perfectly well-intentioned." Elsewhere, Forster describes Mr. Hall, the younger partner of the firm, as being "a very kind, well-disposed man." Forster, I know, had a warm regard for both the partners, more particularly for Edward Chapman, who, in addition to a fine business capacity, had a shrewd knowledge of literary possibilities, which is more than every publisher can claim to his credit, and a generous, kindly nature to be read of all men.

Most of Forster's friends, of course, have long since gone to their rest. A few there are—very, very few—

of those who knew Forster well, who are still alive, as if to remind us that the dead past was something really tangible and real. Of these I have already referred to Sir John Tenniel; other two are Mr. Percy Fitzgerald, and Miss Georgina Hogarth, whilst Mrs. Perugini, Charles Dickens's daughter, lives to prove to us, that it is possible to grow younger with the years.

Chapter XIII : *Mainly Theatrical*

SEEING Forster's nature to have been essentially dramatic; that his reputation as a dramatic critic was abnormally high, and that the theatre was with him not a recreation merely, but a virtual necessity, a brief reference to a few of the more celebrated actors and actresses of his day, and with whom he had more or less friendly relations, might be not alone interesting, but biographically informative. His two greatest actor friends, Macready and Fechter, I have dealt with elsewhere, in the more connective portion of the Dickens-Forster story. So as to avoid overlapping in my descriptions of this or that actor or actress, I propose taking separately each particular London house, where we shall be sure to find among the members of the respective stock companies, notable theatrical folk, with whom Forster had—at least—a scraping acquaintance.

The old Haymarket, managed by Benjamin Webster; afterwards, for so many years, lessee, manager, and leading man of the old Adelphi; was at that time the leading London theatre. Webster (at anyrate in his later days, when I knew him) was a fine comedian, and, in intense melodrama, great in such parts as Robert Landry, in the *Dead Heart*, and Richard Pride, in *Janet*

Pride. His Triplet, too, in Charles Reade's *Masks and Faces*, with dear old Mrs. Stirling as Peg Woffington, was something to remember. The Haymarket, especially in the time of Buckstone, who succeeded Webster, was, for more than twenty years, the home of "old comedy." There might be seen *The Busy-Body;* Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer;* Buckstone's Tony Lumpkin being, once seen, a joy for evermore; the polished comedies of Sheridan, and, in fact, everything that was good from out the dramatic cauldron of the eighteenth century. Forster, whose soul was steeped in eighteenth-century dramatic lore, would at frequent intervals lay aside his literary work for a few hours, and renew his imagination in the enjoyment of these ripe and illuminative reproductions at the old Haymarket.

As the great dramatic critic of his day, he was on intimate terms with all the shining lights of the clever company at the old house which succeeded to all the honours of the house next door, built and made famous by "Fordlewife" Foote, the "Little Theatre in the Haymarket." Buckstone, Henry Compton, Chippendale, Charles Coe, Mrs. Fitzwilliam, and many another histrion of like fame, did Forster know and appreciate. To those who can remember this delightful theatrical time in the "Market" Street, where hay had not, I believe, been sold, or even seen, except on passing carts, since early Georgian days, it is all as a vanished Arabian Nights dream.

Old comedy nowadays is played in modern drawing-room fashion, with nothing of the eighteenth century about it save the wigs, and scrupulously correct cos-

tumes. The life and spirit of it all is buried (I fear for ever) in the graves of John Baldwin Buckstone, and his comrades, of the old Haymarket.

In considering the Adelphi Theatre as it was under the management of Frederick Yates, father of that prince of journalists, our own Edmund, we come upon quite a different phase of things theatrical, as they were in Forster's day. A clever comedian, Yates was essentially modern in his tastes and methods. He it was who produced Pierce Egan's *Tom and Jerry* with satisfactory financial results to himself.

"Corinthian Tom," and the rest of these sporty characters of the—well, spectacle, were, for a time, the talk of the town. Apropos, when in New York some twenty years ago, I was, one winter's night, after the theatre, introduced to a certain "fearful and wonderful drink compounded of beaten eggs, brandy, sugar, lemon, spice, and—I shudder now to think of it—*boiling whisky!* The designation of this delectable, or rather *Tophetian* concoction was—and *is*, if they still manufacture it—*Tom and Jerry*, and I was informed by a very old actor (who, by the way, seemed to enjoy the horrible stuff, without any disastrous consequences to himself), that the name had come down by tradition from the old days when a New York version of the London Adelphi success was played to crowded houses.

But it was the "adaptations" of the popular Dickens books which, after all, mainly distinguishes the Yates management of the Adelphi.

I use the word "distinguishes" advisedly, for, taking them one with another. Dickens himself had no love for

these " rough and ready " dramatisations of his novels—he had really just cause to complain. *Nicholas Nickleby* to wit. This particular adaptation, by Edward Stirling, was in very truth " an offence to his art." " While the story," says Forster, " was in the writing; only a third of it, in fact, completed; it was seized upon, and its dialogue hacked, cut and garbled to fit the shape of one or two favourite actors."

Dickens went to see it, Forster recording that the great novelist " saw a merit in parts of the representation." Yates was sufficiently humorous, if wildly extravagant as Mantalini, while O. Smith as Newman Noggs put into his queer angular oddities enough of a hard, dry pathos to, at least, conjure up shadows of the character.

Of Ralph Nickleby there was only the costume, the *actor*, presumably, being " round the corner." Dickens, in a letter to Forster, after the event, was able to praise " the skilful management of the play " generally—Fanny Squeers and her card-party—the careful " make-up " of everybody, and the tableaux from Phiz's sketches Mrs. Keeley was, of course, excellent. A *mis*representation of his *Oliver Twist*, at the Surrey Theatre, which he witnessed, had no such " excusable " moments, and Forster, who was with him, says that " in the middle of the first scene he laid himself down upon the floor in a corner of the box, and never rose from it until the ' drop ' fell."

Forster always thought that it would have been better for him to have kept away from these dramatic reproductions of his stories, as the experiences caused him real

suffering, which he might well have spared himself. With regard to the *Carol* at the Adelphi, he wrote, in 1844, to Forster: "Better than usual, and Wright seems to enjoy Bob Cratchitt, but heartbreaking to me.

"Oh heaven! if any forecast of *this* was ever in my mind! Yet O. Smith was drearily better than I expected. It is a great comfort to have that kind of meat underdone, and his face is quite perfect." It was not that he was not more or less satisfied with individual performances; he was. With, for instance, Yates' Quilp or Mantilini, Mrs. Keeley's Smike or Dot, and Miss Fortescue's Barnaby Rudge. These histrionic efforts he could, and did honestly praise. Forster was no great admirer of the modern drama, had, indeed, rather a contemptuous opinion of it. But he liked Mrs. Keeley, both on the boards, and in private life. Her husband, too, dear old "Bob," was one of the very few contemporary actors who could make him laugh. Edward Wright, principal low comedian at the Adelphi, could never succeed in doing this. He offended Forster's sense of propriety, and sometimes even of common decency. Wright was undoubtedly very coarse, and, its twin vice, very vulgar. Humour of this kind only appeals to the baser sort, which, considering Wright's great popularity, does not say much for the good taste of theatrical audiences in the "forties" and "fifties." J. P. Harley, chief comedian at the theatre in King Street, St. James, was an actor of the "transition" type, *i. e.* the artist, who while breaking away from some of the "fret and fustian" of the old school of

acting, retained just so much of it, as to make his reachings-out towards the revolutionary innovations of the new half-hearted only, and not always effective. Harley was especially clever in the kind of part made so familiar by the late Charles Mathews. Bright, lively, and with a good eye for character, he was quite a theatrical force in his day. He possessed a good voice, too, and, better still, knew how to use it in the singing of humorous songs. Add to all this, that he was gentlemanly and refined, it is not surprising that he was as great a success in his private as he was in his professional life. The Dickens circle esteemed him highly, and he was always a welcome guest at festivities, and gatherings, where his inimitable vocal and musical abilities were always greatly appreciated. Forster had a great liking for him, and never loses an opportunity of expressing his friendly feeling for the actor. In one of Forster's letters to Bulwer Lytton, elsewhere quoted, he mentions the name of Samuel Phelps in connection with a pending production by the great Shakespearian actor at Sadler's Wells, of a play by Bulwer.

This appears to have been the commencement of an acquaintance which in course of time ripened into a life-long friendship between Phelps and the rising young journalist and man of letters. The ponderous, heavy, robust style of the actor, would, almost naturally, appeal to Forster, who was built pretty much upon the same lines. Both were "solid" men, men with a purpose, and as such, were in perfect sympathy.

The sonorous elocution of Phelps, his dignified deliberation of manner, and the absorbing seriousness with

which he attacked his work, would be a perfect delight to Forster, as, no doubt, it really was. Except, perhaps, Herman Vezin, he was the last of the "old guard" of the stage.

Helen Faucit, at one time Macready's leading lady, and her husband, Theodore Martin, private secretary to the late Queen Victoria, were great friends of Forster's. Although Helen Faucit graduated in the old school, so much contemned in these very superior days, she was a fine Shakespearian actress—greater, I think, in such parts as Rosalind (her finest performance) rather than in the more intense rôles—as she practically left the stage upon her marriage, her theatrical career was a comparatively short one.

Not many people in these days can remember the palmy days of the old Strand Theatre, before even the time of Edward Terry, Tom Thorne, David James, and the rest of that only too merry crew of clever mimes. The days I refer to were those, when a certain little lady, known as Miss Marie Wilton, was captivating London playgoers to such an extent, that "full houses" was the rule at the Strand, the capacity of which little house was of the smallest. In 1858, we find Dickens writing to Forster from Coventry, about this very young person. He says: "I really wish you would go and see the *Maid and the Magpie* burlesque at the Strand Theatre. There is the strangest thing in it that ever I have seen on the stage, the boy, Pippo, by Miss Wilton. While it is astonishingly impudent (must be, or it couldn't be done at all), it is so stupendously like a boy, and unlike a woman, that it is perfectly free from offence . . . the

audacity of it is surprising. A thing that you *can-not* imagine a woman's doing at all. I have never seen such a curious thing, and the girl's talent is unchallengeable. I call her the cleverest girl I have ever seen on the stage in my time, and the most singularly original." Need I add, that this clever little girl, and the Lady Bancroft we all know to-day, are one and the same? Both she and her husband, Sir Squire Bancroft, were, I believe, well known to Forster.

Of all curious stage products—male or female—the strangest and most eccentric of all, was Fanny Kelly, proprietress of the little band-box of a theatre in Dean Street, Soho. "Fanny Kelly" (I cannot do better than quote from Forster), "the friend of Charles Lamb, . . . was not more delightful on the stage, than impracticable when off." The Duke of Devonshire built the little Dean Street Theatre for her, and a very small modicum of common-sense would have enabled her to make a little gold mine out of it. But her whims and fancies always stood in the way. Dickens, writing to Forster in 1845, when *Every Man in His Humour* was in rehearsal at her theatre, says: "Heavens! such a scene as I have had with Miss Kelly here this morning! "She wanted us put off until the theatre should be cleaned and brushed up a bit, and she would and she would not, for she is eager to have us, and alarmed when she thinks of us. . . . She exaggerates the importance of our occupation, dreads the least prejudice against her establishment in the minds of any of our company, says the place has already quite ruined her, and with tears in her eyes protests that any jokes at

her additional expense in print would drive her mad. By the body of Cæsar, the scene was incredible. It's like a preposterous dream." Such was Fanny Kelly, whom some called mad, but who was, without doubt, just a harmless eccentric. And as was the proprietress, so was the small theatre in Dean Street that called her mistress. A chaos of darkness, confusion and dirt! And then, too, the mass of absurdity and worse that was shut up sometimes within the walls of that " wee bit house " near Soho Square! Stories were told of ghosts that had been met with in the darksome passages, and in dim recesses of the dirty little place. Forster tells of the " straw-hatted man " who wandered in and out, at all sorts of unreasonable hours. A melancholy man who seemed to have no business, and who afterwards turned out to be a pupil of Fanny Kelly's, a candidate for the tragic stage!

Chapter XIV: *A Great Bequest*

WHEN John Forster finally decided to leave his books, his pictures (including a considerable number of drawings, sketches, and prints), and his valuable collection of autographs, letters of famous people, and other manuscripts to the Nation, he was largely influenced in his decision by three important considerations. First, he was childless; secondly, he wished that his collection should remain intact, to the intent that it might be of service and benefit to those students who might desire to consult, or otherwise make legitimate use of any of its objects; and thirdly, he believed that by disposing of his literary and artistic treasures in this way he should prevent any or all of them from leaving the Kingdom.

To carry out this bequest, and the other provisions of his will, Forster appointed as executors, the Rev. Whitwell Elwin, Rector of Booton, Norwich; Robert, Lord, afterwards Earl of Lytton, and Mr. Justice Chitty. Lord Lytton being in India, as Viceroy, the whole burden of the business fell upon the other two, but mainly upon Elwin. The literary part of it was particularly heavy, amongst the onerous and responsible

duties, being the examining, preservation, or destruction of a vast number of papers and letters. " Elwin's own inclination and Forster's instructions," says Warwick Elwin in his memoirs of his father—" were in the direction of destroying all personal letters, however eminent the writer might be." As I have said in my account of Elwin, I am of opinion that he erred on the side of destructiveness, by which error of judgment we are to-day the poorer.

Apart from this, the literary and artistic value (more particularly the former) of that which, in the Victoria and Albert Museum at South Kensington, is known as the " Forster Collection," is very great. I do not think the public really realises its own good-fortune in being the possessors of such a treasure. The library alone is, without exaggeration, one of the richest in existence in early nineteenth, eighteenth, and seventeenth century literature, and I can personally testify to the neglect of this mine of untold literary wealth by those to whom it legally belongs. To many its existence is practically unknown, while I have often noticed, for days together, and when working in the Forster Library, nothing but a waste of unoccupied desks. One would have imagined that the leisured man of literary tastes would only too delightedly avail himself of the treasures, not only at his door, but at his command. But no, he passes by, either in ignorance, or because he does not care, and that which could, and should minister to his delight and mental benefit, lies idle upon the shelf, a silent reproach to the non-intelligence, and woeful indifference of its lord and owner. It has for many years been my great



THE FORSTER BEQUEST READING-ROOM AT VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM

From a photograph by G. Bonnier

desire and ambition to plead for a better recognition by its owner, the public, of Forster's great and priceless gift to his countrymen. The opportunity to realise my dream occurs in this centenary tribute to the memory of the donor. Forster had, I suppose, a greater number of friends than any man in his position, or out of it, has ever possessed. It is an old man's fancy to suggest, that the worthiest way, as he conceives it, for the Nation to testify its gratitude for what it has received at John Forster's hands, is that it should, in effect, constitute itself his friend, by not only ceasing to neglect his gift, but by making the use of it he undoubtedly originally intended.

This is what, with all his heart, he would himself have wished—that the nation, to whom, out of the fulness of his soul, he had given of his best, should, of all the friends he had ever known, be the truest, the dearest, and the most enduring.

I purpose now, in conclusion, to briefly explain the nature of this "great bequest," and to point out some of its gems, more especially with reference to the literary portion of it.

To begin with, there are some single books, which for many reasons are not only rare and valuable, but at the same time inherently interesting. For instance, there is a copy of Addison's *Travels in Italy*, in the original binding, and with an autograph inscription by the author to Jonathan Swift, Dean of St. Patrick's. Addison calls the Dean "The Truest Friend." There is also the copy of the 4th edition of Byron's *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, 1811, given by Lord Byron

to Leigh Hunt. The copy is autographed and corrected by the poet.

Two of the choicest treasures are Browning's manuscripts of *Paracelsus* and *Christmas Eve and Easter Day*, both autographically inscribed to Forster by the poet. Another, is the first edition of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, and the first edition of Shakespeare's *Richard III* used by Edmund Kean : bought by the elder Browning; bequeathed by him to the poet, who gave it to Forster. The above are mentioned, not so much for their rarity or intrinsic value, but because of some accidental circumstance which gives them, like other books in the collection, a particular interest. The collection of old plays is both extensive and of interest.

Of rare books two or three may be especially noted. Bishop Hooper's *Seven Sermons upon the Holy Prophete Jonas*, 1550; a fair copy, but without the colophon. Also, Sir Thomas More's Works, folio, 1557, and the 1660 edition of *The Testament of the XIJ Patriarchs*. Forster's library fortunately includes a copy of the first edition of Shakespeare, 1623, and two copies of the 1632 edition. At the beginning of one of the latter is a sonnet by Proctor (Barry Cornwall) addressed to Forster, in the poet's handwriting. A volume containing one hundred and fifty proclamations and broadsides, dating from 1629 to 1688. Some relate to the levying of ship-money, 1640, and one is the declaration of Charles the Second, as to his marriage with Lucy Walters, 1678 The tracts and pamphlets relating to the "great rebellion," are many and valuable.

Many of the books have manuscript notes by Forster.



FACSIMILE OF THE PAGE FROM BROWNING'S "PARACELSUS," WITH AUTOGRAPH NOTE IN MARGIN BY THE POET TO JOHN FORSTER.

The collection of autographs is remarkable. Royal personages, and famous people of old and modern times are represented. Here, too, also, is the Garrick correspondence, to and from, consisting of one thousand six hundred letters. There is hardly a name of any note in the seventeenth century which is not represented. The Swift manuscripts are very interesting.

The Dean's note-books, in his own handwriting, and a copy of the *Directions to Servants*, with his own corrections.

Here is Forster's own account of the rarest of all his treasures—

" The most rare of all my acquisitions, remains to be mentioned. It is the large-paper copy of the first edition of *Gulliver*, which belonged to the friend who carried Swift's manuscript with so much mystery to Motte, the publisher, interleaved for alterations and additions by the author, and containing, beside all the changes, erasures and substitutions adopted in the latter edition, several interesting passages, mostly in the voyage to Laputa, which have never yet been given to the world."

The Dickens correspondence is in the form of letters and other MS. memorials. But the glory of them all is the series of manuscripts by the great novelist, which can never be rivalled.

Some of the latter were given to Forster in his lifetime, the rest came to him under the authority of a clause in Dickens's will.

The manuscripts are fifteen in number, from *Oliver Twist* to *Edwin Drood*.

It has been my privilege to have had some of them in my hand, a privilege which I appreciated in a way I can hardly describe.

These are only a very few of the "good things" to be found in the Forster Collection. I mention them only in the hope that it will encourage students and others to dig for themselves out of this veritable mine of literary wealth.

Many of the paintings are by Maclise, Frith, Egg, Mr. C. E. Perugini (this artist's portrait of John Forster is it that has been selected for reproduction as a frontispiece to this work), Cattermole, etc. Of drawings by Forster's intimate, Maclise, there is a very large collection. Among these are many of the famous sketches of the "Fraserians," which were published first in *Fraser's Magazine*, from about 1830 to 1838, and afterwards in book form.

Also a very curious portrait of Sir Walter Scott, which Maclise sketched when a boy of fourteen, and which was the first thing that brought him into notice. The drawing was made in Ireland at a time when Walter Scott happened to be in a shop, and it was afterwards either etched or lithographed.

This print must be excessively rare; a copy is in the Forster Collection. Some idea may be formed of the extent of the collection of drawings by Maclise from the fact that besides those in albums, there is a revolving stand of thirty frames filled with his sketches and portraits. One of the most interesting is a pencil sketch, believed to be of J. M. W. Turner, R.A., sitting on a high stool before a large easel.

.

TRAVELS

INTO SEVERAL

Remote NATIONS

OF THE

WORLD.

In FOUR PARTS.

By *LEMUEL GULLIVER*,
First a SURGEON, and then a CAPTAIN of ſeveral SHIPS.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

Printed for BENJ. MOTTE, *at the Middle* Temple-Gate *in* Fleet-ſtreet.
MDCCXXVI.

FACSIMILE OF THE TITLE-PAGE OF THE FIRST EDITION OF "GULLIVER'S TRAVELS" IN THE FORSTER BEQUEST

John Forster is buried in Kensal Green Cemetery, in the family vault bought by him when his sister died in 1868. Here also Mrs. Forster lies. She died in 1894, having survived her second husband eighteen years and six months.

.

No truer description of John Forster, alike as man and literary craftsman, has ever been penned, than that graven on his monument. I, therefore, quote it here as a fitting ending to this brief, and, I fear, very imperfect record of a great-hearted, highly-gifted man's power to make friends, and to keep them.

In Memory of

JOHN FORSTER, ESQ.,

HISTORIAN, BIOGRAPHER AND CRITIC.

Noted in private life
For the robustness of his character
And the warmth of his affections.
For his ceaseless industry in literature and business
And the lavish services in the midst of his crowded life
He rendered to friends;
For his keen appreciation of every species of excellence,
And the generosity of his judgments
On books and men.

Born 2nd April, 1812,
Died 1st February, 1876.

APPENDIX A

Leonardo Da Vinci.

My attention has been quite recently drawn to three small note-books, in the Forster collection, containing sketches, and art memoranda, made by Leonardo Da Vinci, the great Italian painter of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. These books (covering a period of twelve years, 1493–1505), contain text, diagrams, pencil, chalk and pencil drawings. They were given to John Forster by the Earl of Lytton, who bought them at Venice. The contents include perspective, light and shade, the human figure, the practice of painting, the artist's materials, the history of the art of painting, studies and sketches for pictures and decorations, sculpture, architecture, physiology, maxims, morals, fables, jests and tales, prophecies, draughts and schemes for his humorous writing, etc. Da Vinci invariably wrote from right to left. Two of the little volumes are note-books, or pocket-books, bound in pigskin. According to an old Italian writer (Giraldi, 1534), it was the practice of Da Vinci to carry about with him, attached to his girdle, a little book for making sketches.

APPENDIX B

Carlyle and Forster.

It is generally understood that Forster was originally designated one of Carlyle's executors; his death, however, in 1876, automatically cancelled this appointment, James Anthony Froude taking the place of his brother historian, under the will of the Sage of Chelsea.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF JOHN FORSTER'S LIFE AND WORKS

1812. Born, Newcastle-on-Tyne, April 2.
1827. *A Few Thoughts in Vindication of the Stage.*
1828. *Charles at Tunbridge, or the Cavalier of Wildenhurst:* a play.
1832. Joined the Staff of the *True Sun* as dramatic critic.
Editor of the *Reflector.*
1833. Contributed to the *Courier*, the *Athenæum* and the *Examiner.*
1836–9. Contributed essays on the Statesmen of the Commonwealth to *Edinburgh Review*, *Foreign Quarterly Review* and other publications.
1840. *The Statesmen of the Commonwealth of England.* 7 Vols. London. Fcap. 8vo.
1842–3. Editor *Foreign Quarterly Review.*
1846. Editor the *Daily News.*
1847. Editor the *Examiner.*
1848. *The Life and Adventures of Oliver Goldsmith.* London, 8vo.
1854. *The Life and Times of Oliver Goldsmith* (his former book re-written as a literary history of the Period). London, 2 vols. 8vo.
1855. Abridged Edition of above. London, Cr. 8vo.
1856. Married Mrs. Colburn, the widow of the publisher.
1860. *The Debates on the Grand Remonstrance, November and December, 1641: With an introductory essay on English Freedom under the Plantagenet and Tudor Sovereigns.* London, 8vo.
1860. *Arrest of the Five Members by Charles the First: a chapter of History re-written.* London, 8vo.
1862. *Lives of Daniel Defoe* and *Charles Churchill*, forming Vol. 38 in Longman's Travellers' Library.
1864. *Sir John Elliot:* a biography, 1590–1632. London, 2 vols., 8vo.
1869. *Walter Savage Landor:* a biography, 1775–1864. London, 2 vols, 8vo.
1871–4. *The Life of Charles Dickens.* London, 3 vols., 8vo.
1875. *Life of Jonathan Swift:* Volume 1, 1667–1711. London, 8vo.
1876. Died, Kensington, February 1.

INDEX

Addison, Joseph, 199, 265
" A few Thoughts in Vindication of the stage," 7
Afghanistan, 156
—— War in, 156
Ainsworth, W. Harrison, 48, 49, 50, 51, 53, 54, 55, 56, 92, 107, 247
Albert, Prince Consort, 73
—— Edward, Prince of Wales, 238
All the Year Round, 85, 214
American Notes, 191
Amos, Andrew (Professor), 12, 17, 100
Arrest of the Five Membe s, 151
Asola (Italy), 209
Athenæum, 28
Athenæus, 201
Aurora Leigh, 187

Bacon, Francis (Viscount St. Albans), 119
Balfour, Rt. Hon. Arthur J., 72
—— Lady Betty, 142
Bamford, Samuel, 193
Bancroft, Lady (" Marie Wilton"), 260, 261
—— Sir Squire, 261
Barnaby Rudge, 53, 258
Battle of Life, 236
Beaconsfield, Earl of (Benjamin Disraeli), 113, 156, 157, 237
Beard, Dr., 89
Beaumont, 197, 202
Beaver, Hugh, 52
Becket, 30
Bedford, Paul, 68
Bentley, Richard, 53, 142
Bentley's Miscellany, 53, 54
Besant, Sir Walter, 4
Birmingham, 63, 118
Black Eyed Susan, 163, 171, 172, 173, 174
Blanchard Laman, 105, 106, 175, 227
Bleak House, 129
Blot on the 'Scutcheon, 30
" Bobadil," 134
" Bob Cratchitt, 258
Bodleian Library, Oxford, 202
Booton, Norfolk, 108, 263
Boots at the Swan, 81
Boswell, James, 38, 119
Bottle, The, 248
" Boz," 117, 127, 129
Bracebridge, C. H., 121
Brassington, W. Salt, F.S.A., 116, 131, 132, 133, 135
Brighton, 241
Broadstairs, 135, 219, 241
Brooke, Gustavus V., 222
Brotheston, Mary, 75, 192
Browne, Hablot K. (Phiz.), 52, 54, 257
Browning, Elizabeth Barrett, 187
—— Robert, 1, 2, 3, 10, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 111, 112, 178, 179, 210, 266
Brutus, 144, 198
Buckstone, J. Baldwin, 68, 82, 103, 130, 255, 256
Burdett-Coutts, Miss (Baroness), 191
Burnand, Sir Francis C., 70, 73, 246
Busy-Body, The, 255
Byron, Lord, 105, 239, 264

Cambridge, 9
Carey, Nance, 33
" Carker," 79
Carlisle, Lady, 152
—— Lord, 237, 238
—— Jane Welsh, 36, 40, 41, 45

Carlyle, Thomas, 2, 8, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 125, 159, 164, 179, 210, 214
Chambers's Journal, 50
Chapman & Hall, 201, 209, 251
——, Edward, 251, 252
Chappell, Messrs., 89
Charge of the Light Brigade, 164, 195
" Charles Oakley," 171
Charles at Tunbridge, 7
Chatterton, F. B., 81
Cheadle Hall, Cheshire, 54
Cheltenham, 34
Cheltnam, C. Smith, 138
Cheeryble Brothers, 52
Chimes, The, 209
Chimney Corner, 81
Chingford, 71
Chippendale, J., 255
Chitty, Thomas, K.C. (Mr. Justice), 13, 14, 111, 263
Christmas Carol, A, 87, 89, 209, 224, 257
Christmas Eve, 266
Chronicle, The, 251
Clarissa, 163
Cockburn, Sir Alexander (Lord Chief Justice), 203, 204, 205
Coe, Charles, 255
Colbourne, Alderman W. G., 116, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131
Colburn, Eliza Ann, 94, 95, 96, 97, 111, 114, 147, 148, 237
——, Henry, 94, 95, 158, 160
Cole, Sir Henry, C. B., 132, 230
——, Miss, 133
Collier, J. Payne, 121
Collingwood, Lord, 6
Collins, Wilkie, 117, 211, 212, 213, 215, 242
——, Charles Allston, 211
Commissions in Lunacy, 179
Compton, Edward, 130
——, Henry, 130, 255
——, Mrs. Henry, 130, 131
Constable, T. R. A., 97
Cooke, T. P. (" Tippy"), 73, 173, 174
Cookery, School of, South Kensington, 133
Cooper, Thomas, 176
" Corinthian Tom," 256
Cornwall, 63, 216
" Cornwall, Barry " (Bryan Waller Procter), 20, 21, 170, 171, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 266
Corri, H., 171
Corsenside, near Newcastle, 4
Courcel, Marquis de, 135
Coventry, 260
Craven, Lord, 246
Crimea, 195
Crimean War, 44, 45
Cromwell, Oliver, 17, 66
Crosbie, Fanny, VII
Crossley, James, 52, 107
Cruikshank, George, 247, 248, 249
Cruise upon Wheels, 212
" Crummles," 170, 172
Cunningham, Peter, 117, 121, 123, 244, 245
——, Allan, 244

Daily News, 75, 208
David Copperfield, 163
Davidge, 174
Dead Heart, 254
" Deerfoot," 188
Defoe, Daniel, 266
Dekker, 202
Devonshire, Duke of, 261
Dickens, Alfred, 63
Dickens, Charles Culliford Boz, 85, 191
——, Charles (son of Charles, jun.), 85
——, Charles, 1, 2, 4, 23, 26, 32, 34, 38, 43, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 62, 63, 65, 66, 68, 70, 74, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 84, 85, 86, 87, 89, 90, 91, 92, 95, 96, 98, 99, 107, 108, 109, 116, 117, 119, 123, 125, 127, 128, 129, 130, 133, 134, 135, 140, 141, 149, 150, 151, 159, 164, 165, 166, 190, 191, 203, 204, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 224, 225, 227, 229, 231, 232, 233, 235, 236, 237, 238, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247,

248, 251, 252, 256, 257, 259, 260, 261, 267,
Dickens, Charles, Life of, 49, 55, 70, 107, 117, 119, 196, 209, 210, 212, 225, 228
——, Mrs. Charles, 92, 224
——, MSS., 267
——, Sidney Smith Haldimand, 85
" Dick Swiveller," 246
Directions to Servants (Swift), 267
Dolby, George, 236
Dombey, 240
Dombey, Mrs., 79
D'Orsay, Count, 102, 103, 194
" Dot," 258
Dyce, Alexander, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202
——, General, 198
——, General Archibald, 199

Easter Day, 266
Edgbaston, 131
Edinburgh Review, 239
Edwin Drood, 267
Egan, Pierce, 256
Egg, Augustus, R.A., 215, 241, 242, 268
Eglington, Earl of, 67
Eglington Tournament, 67
Eldon, Lord, 6
Eliot, George, 152, 153
Eliot, Sir John, 18
Elizabeth, Princess Palatine, 246
Ellis, B. M., 48, 49, 50, 52, 54, 56, 107
Elliston, 174
Elton, E. W., 222
Elwin, Warwick, 111, 264
——, Whitwell, Rev., 108, 109, 110, 111, 263, 264
Emerson, Ralph Waldo, 125
——, Sir James (Tennent), 11, 13, 14, 17, 26, 75, 126, 128, 150
English Bards and Scotch Reviewers, 264
Epping Forest, 71
Eugene Aram, 137, 139
Every Man in his Humour, 62, 117, 135, 150, 177, 218, 261
Examiner, The, 3, 10, 27, 28, 33, 41, 55, 75, 104, 144, 145, 146, 164, 175, 176, 192, 195, 227 239, 240, 249, 250, 252
Exhibition, Hyde Park (1851), 141 193

" Fagin," 232
" Fanny," 132
" Fanny Squeers," 257
Faucit, Helen (Lady Theodore Martin), 260
Fechter, Charles, 68, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 212, 254
Fitzgerald, Percy, 77, 253
Fitzwilliam, Mrs., 255
Fletcher, 197, 202
Flower, W., 121
Foley, T. H., R.A., 229
Fonblanque, Albany, 41, 144, 145, 164, 175, 249, 250, 251
Ford, 202
Forster Bequest, 29, 63, 78, 102, 160, 212, 234, 237, 263, 264, 268
Forster, Eliza Ann, 84, 100, 110, 113, 115, 158, 188, 189, 237, 269
——, Christopher, 4
——, Elizabeth, 4
—— epitaph, 269
——, Jane, 4
——, John, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 48, 49, 50, 51, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 70, 74, 75, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 102, 103, 104, 105, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 153, 154, 155, 157, 158, 160, 161, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190,

191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 223, 224, 225, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269
Forster, John (uncle), 5, 9, 15
——, John (grandfather), 4
——, Lionel, 4
——, Mary (mother), 4, 6, 9
——, Robert (father), 4, 6, 9
——, Thomas, 4
Fortescue, Miss, 258
Fox, W. J., 10, 159, 207, 208, 209, 210
Fraser's Magazine, 268
French Revolution, 165
Frikel, Wilbäja, 85
Frith, Walter, 97
——, William Powell, R.A., 97, 98, 99, 217, 218, 240, 268
Frozen Deep, The, 215

Gadshill Place, 81, 150
Garrick, David, 22, 82, 119
—— Letters, 267
Gaskell, Mrs., 193
Gates, Miss Eliza, 171, 172
George III, King, 158, 165
Gibson, Rt. Hon. Milner, M.P., 237, 238
Gilmour, Anne, 4
——, James, 4, 5
Gladstone, Rt. Hon. W. E., 237
Goldsmith, Oliver, 22, 38, 120, 165, 229
Gomersal, Mr., 171
Gourlay, Mr., 171
Grant, Daniel, 52
——, William, 52
Great Expectations, 151
Greene, 197, 200, 202
"Green Hill," Hampstead, 215
Greenwich, 59
Guild of Literature and Art, 70, 74, 116, 134, 141, 150, 237
Gulliver's Travels, 29, 267
"Guppy," 129

Hall, William, 251, 252
Hamlet, 62, 77, 80, 84, 217
Hard Cash, 186 *n*
Harley, J. P., 225, 258, 259
"Harriet," 171
Haunted Man, 247
Headland, Mr., 236
Henley Street, Stratford-on-Avon, 120
Heywood, 202
Hogarth, Miss Georgina, 62, 65, 78, 253
——, Mary, 78
——, William, 97, 248
Hornby, Mrs., 119
Holland, Lord, 138
Hooper, Bishop, 266
Home Sweet Home, 234
Houghton, Lord (Monckton Milnes), 233, 234, 238
Household Words, 212
Hunt, Leigh, 3, 63, 137, 138, 139, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 164, 165, 179, 182, 187, 241, 264
Hutchings, William, 128

"Infant Phenomenon," 172
In Memoriam, 193
Ion, 223
Irving, Henry, 30, 82
——, Washington, 124, 125, 126, 127

James I, King, 246
——, David, 260
Janet Pride, 254
Jealous Wife, 171
Jeffrey, Lord, 238, 239, 240
"Jem Baggs," 81
Jerrold, Douglas William, 103, 159, 163, 164, 169, 170, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 183, 211, 213, 228
——, sen., 173
"Jingle," 79
Jerdan, W., 105, 106
Johnson, Dr. Samuel, 22, 38, 63, 118, 119, 128, 165
Jonson, Ben, 150, 202
Kean, Charles, 68, 82

Kean, Edmund, 26, 29, 32, 33, 82, 199, 266
——, Edmund, Life of, 180
Keeley, Robert ("Bob"), 236, 258
——, Mrs., 236, 257, 258
Kelly, Miss Fanny, 134, 135, 261, 262
Kemble, John, 198
Kenealy, Dr., 204
Kenyon, John, 186
King of the Belgians, 238
"Kitely," 62, 117, 134
Knebworth, 149, 150
Knight, Charles, 121
——, Miss Maria, 189
Knowles, Sheridan, 22

Ladder of Gold, 186
Lady of Lyons, 137, 141, 144, 226
Lamb, Charles, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 68, 179, 227, 261
——, Charles, Letters of, 226
——, Mary, 20, 23
——, Lady Caroline, 105
"Lamp Post," 132
Landon, Mr., 106
Landor, Walter Savage, 2, 43, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 189, 190
Landor, W. S., Life of, 165, 189, 196
La Vallière, 141
Leamington, 79
Leech, John, 71, 217, 218, 219, 220
L. E. L. (Letitia Elizabeth Landon), 104, 105, 106, 107, 228
Lemon, Mark, 71, 176, 245, 246, 247
Lichfield, 63, 118
Life of Charles Dickens (Forster), 49, 55, 70, 107, 117, 119, 196, 209, 210, 212, 225, 228
"Linda," 236
Literary Gazette, 106
Little Dorrit, 89
"Little Nell," 128, 166, 240
Liverpool, 135
Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper, 177
Logan Stone, 63, 64
London, 53, 58, 87, 111, 116, 121, 191, 207
London, Old Adelphi Theatre 212, 236, 254, 256, 257
Albert Bridge, Chelsea, 46
"Blue Posts," Holborn, 27
Bouverie Street, 71, 246
British Museum, 40
Broad Court, Bow Street, 174
"Brook Green," 217
"Brompton Boilers" (South Kensington), 230
Bryanston Square, 94, 237
Buckingham Palace, 86
Burton Street, St. Pancras, 16, 17, 138
Carlton House, 162
Chelsea, 159
Cheyne Row, Chelsea, 47
"Cock," Tavern, Fleet Street, 75, 192
Cornwall Road, 217
Covent Garden Theatre, 221, 222, 225
Dean Street Theatre (now Royalty), Soho, 261, 262
Devonshire House, 73
—— Terrace, 134, 238
Doughty Street, 58, 92
Drury Lane Theatre, 81, 133, 173
Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly, 235
Field Lane Ragged Schools, etc., 232
Furnival's Inn, Holborn, 251
Gloucester Place, No. 57, Hyde Park Gardens, 85
Gray's Inn Coffee-house, 186
Gray's Inn Sq., 199
"Jack Straw's Castle," 57
Hammersmith, 217
Hampstead, 57, 58, 59, 215, 216
Hampstead Heath, 58, 59, 216
Hans Place, No. 25, Chelsea, 104, 106
—— Place, No. 22, Chelsea, 105
Harrow Road, 50
Haymarket Theatre, 130, 221, 222
Hertford Street, Mayfair, 101, 254, 255, 256
Horsemonger Lane Gaol, 162
Houses of Parliament, 74, 75, 138, 208

London, Kensal Green Cemetery, 74, 269
Kensal Lodge, 49, 50, 51
King Street, St. James's, 258
Lincoln's Inn Fields, No. 58, 24, 114, 142, 147, 148, 207, 209
" London Coffee-house," 220
Lyceum Theatre, 81, 133
Montague Square, No. 46, 148, 149, 194
Oakley Street, Chelsea, 46
Old Brompton Road, 106
Olympic Theatre, 21, 81
Oxford Terrace, Hyde Park, 199
Palace Gate House, 114, 194
Patent Museum (South Kensington), 230
Penton Place, No. 17, Pentonville, 10, 12, 16, 26, 100, 138
Polygraphic Hall (afterwards Toole's Theatre), 84
Portsdown Road, Bayswater, 71
Princesses Theatre, 80, 81
Ritz, The, 79
Rowan Road, Hammersmith, 159
Sadler's Wells Theatre, 144, 259
St. James's Hall, 87
St. James's Theatre, 258
St. Paul's, 58
South Kensington, 30, 64, 78, 99, 132, 159, 197, 201, 202, 221, 230
" *Spaniards, The*," 57
Strand Theatre, 260
Surrey Theatre, Old, 173, 174, 257
Tavistock House, 215, 231
Temple Bar, 22
" Three Cripples," Clerkenwell, 232
Victoria and Albert Museum, 23, 78, 132, 203
Whitehall Place, No. 19, 153, 264
London Gazette, 122
Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth, 125, 126, 127, 128, 150
Lovelace, 179
Lunacy Commission, 187, 195, 231
—— Commission, Secretary to, 187
Lytton, Robert (1st Earl of), 137, 142, 147, 154, 155, 156, 157, 263
—— (2nd Earl of), 137, 145
——, Sir Ed. Bulwer (1st Baron), 70, 73, 101, 102, 111, 137, 138, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 146, 147, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 158, 160, 164, 178, 192, 194, 210, 214, 226, 259
Lytton, Robert (1st Earl), Life, Letters and Literary Remains of, 142

Macaulay, Lord Thomas Babington, 44, 138, 164
Maclean, Colonel George, 106
Maclise, Daniel, R.A., 32, 53, 56, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 74, 75, 76, 78, 97, 99, 117, 119, 166, 192, 209, 214, 216, 217, 240, 268
McLish, Alexander, 60, 61
——, Mrs., 60, 61
Macready, W. C., 2, 10, 25, 26, 27, 31, 32, 33, 34, 62, 82, 99, 101, 141, 159, 185, 190, 193, 194, 210, 221, 224, 225, 254
Maggs Bros., Messrs., 209
Maguin, Dr., 104
Maid and the Magpie, 260
" Maiden Aunt," 79
Manchester, 51, 52, 54, 117, 135
Mann, Sir H., 180
Manners, Lord John, 123
" Mantalini," 257, 258
Market Street, Stratford-on-Avon, 124
Marlowe, 200, 201, 202
Martin Chuzzlewit, 38, 65, 191, 224
Martin, Sir Theodore, 260
——, Lady Theodore (Helen Faucit), 260
Mary Barton, 193
Masks and Faces, 255
Maslin, Mrs. Victor, 135, 136
Massinger, 202
Master Humphrey's Clock, 118, 224

Mathews, Charles, 68, 259
Matz, B. W., 209
Mazzini, Giuseppe, 40, 41, 42, 43
Memorial Library, Stratford-on-Avon, 133, 135, 136
Mer de Glace, 242
" Mermaid *v.* Manatee," 159
Middleton, 202
Mill on the Floss, 152
Miller, Felix M., 229, 230
Mill, John Stuart, 29
Milnes, Monckton (1st Baron Houghton), 233, 234
Milward, Mr. and Mrs., 131
Milton, Thomas, 77
Mitford, Miss Mary, 105
Moises, Rev. E., 6
Money, 141, 144
Mont Blanc, 235, 236
Monthly Repository, 208
More, Sir T., 266
Morley, Prof. Henry, 7, 11, 15, 17, 155, 251
Morton, Saville, 75, 192
" Mr. Oakley," 171
Mrs. Caudle, 163, 174, 230
" Mrs. Oakley,' 171
Moxon, 20, 193
Mulready, W., R.A., 218

Namur, H. M. S., 172, 173, 213, 214
Napoleon Bonaparte, 165, 171
——, Louis, 44, 68, 194
Nasmyth, Patrick, 230
——, R., 230
Nelson, Lord, 214
Newcastle-on-Tyne, 3, 4, 15, 20, 184, 237
—— Grammar School, 6
—— Theatre Royal, 7
" Newman Noggs," 257
New Monthly Magazine, 137
New Sentimental Journey, 212
New York, 222, 256
Nicholas Nickleby, 52, 171, 257
" Noah Claypole," 232
No Thoroughfare, 212
" Nymph at the Waterfall," 62, 64

O'Connell, Daniel, 43
Œdipus, 144

Old Acquaintance, 192
Old Curiosity Shop, 89
Oliver Twist, 53, 132, 232, 247, 248, 257, 267
Ostend, 173
Othello, 81
Otway, 197
Outram, Sir James, 229
Overeach, Sir Giles, 198

Paracelsus, 25*n*, 28, 29, 264
Paris, 191
—— Exhibition (1856), 205
Pauline, 3, 10, 26, 29, 208
Payne, John Howard, 234
Peele, 200, 202
" Peg Woffington," 255
" Pennsylvania Dutchmen," 82, 84
Perugini, Mr., 268
——, Mrs. (Kate Dickens), 253
Phelps, Samuel, 144, 259
Philadelphia, U.S., 82, 83, 84
Pickwick Papers, 49, 79, 87, 88, 128, 132, 236, 251
" Pip," 151
" Pippo," 260
" Plough and Harrow," 131
Power, W. G. Tyrone, 221, 222
Praed, Mackworth, 138
" President," S. S., 222
Princes Street, Cork, 60
Pritchard, Mr., 171
——, Mrs., 199
Proclamations, Broadsides, etc. 266
Procter, Adelaide, 178
——, Bryan Waller (" Barry Cornwall "), 20, 21, 170, 171, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 191, 266
Punch, 70, 71, 174, 176, 193, 217, 218, 219, 220, 238, 245
Purgatory of Suicides, 176
Purland, T., 117, 134

Quain, Sir Richard, M.D., 108, 112, 113
Queen Anne and Her Times, 142
Queen Mary, 30
" Quilp," 258

" Ralph Nickleby," 257

Reade, Charles, 186 *n*
Redgrave, Richard, R.A., 97
"Red Horse" Hotel, Stratford-on-Avon, 124, 125, 128, 129
Reynolds, Sir Joshua, 22
"Richard Pride," 254
Richardson, Samuel, 163
Richlieu, 101, 141
Richmond, Surrey, 59, 63, 66
—— Theatre, 26, 35
Rienzi, 137, 143, 144
Rip Van Winkle, 124
Road to Ruin, 97
"Robert Landry," 254
Robinson Crusoe, 266
Robson, Frederick, 68, 81, 201
Rogers, Samuel, 63, 138
"Rosalind," 260
"*Rosemary for Remembrance*," 192
Rowden, Miss, 105
Royal Academy, 74, 97, 219
—— Literary Fund, 234
Russell, Lord William, 207
Ruy Blas, 80, 84

St. Bernard, 236
St. James's and St. Giles's, 163
St. James's Square, No. 35, Bath, 166
St. Michael's Mount, 64
Sambourne, Linley, 71, 72
Saunders and Otley, Messrs., 101
Scotland, 67
Scott, Sir Walter, 198, 268
Sea Captain, 141
Seven Sermons upon the Holie Prophete Jonas (Hooper), 266
Shaftesbury (9th Earl of), 187, 231, 232, 233
Shakespeare's Birthplace, 79, 117, 118, 120, 122, 244
Shakespeare Society, 120, 122, 225
——, William, 63, 77, 116, 119, 120, 123, 144, 151, 197, 200, 201, 202, 203, 226, 266
Sheerness, 172
—— Theatre, 172, 173
Shelley, Percy Bysshe, 164
She Stoops to Conquer, 255
Siddons, Mrs., 199
Sketches by Boz, 247
"Smike," 258
Smith, Albert, 220, 235, 236
Smith, Arthur, 236
Smith, O., 257, 258
Smollett, Mrs., 198
——, Tobias, 198
S.P.G. (Society for the Propagation of the Gospel), 195
Sothern, Edward Askew, 68
Southey, Robert, 165
Stanfield, Clarkson, R.A., 63, 65, 70, 134, 173, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217
Stanhope, Lord, 237, 238
"Starlight Dick," 57
Statesmen of the Commonwealth, Lives of the, 6, 17, 199
"Stephen," 177
Stirling, Mrs., 255
Stocks House, Cheetham, Manchester, 52
Stone, Frank, R.A., 241, 242
——, Marcus, R.A., 241, 243
Stowe, Harriet Beecher, 181, 182
Strafford, 30
Strafford, Life of, 40
Stranger, The, 172
Stratford-on-Avon, 63, 79, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 130, 133, 225, 244
Stuart, Thomas, 7
Swift, Dean, 93, 264, 267
Swift, Life of, 93, 196

Tale of Two Cities, 243
Talfourd, Thomas Noon (Mr. Justice), 210, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227
Tenniel, Sir John, 70, 71, 72, 73, 116, 117, 218, 253
Tennyson, Alfred (1st Baron), 30, 75, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196
——, Hallam (2nd Baron), 75, 164, 192, 195, 196
Terry, Edward, 260
Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, 266
Thackeray, W. M., 64, 65, 71, 75, 86, 164, 171, 192, 210, 211, 216, 217
Thomson, Dr., 121
——, Sir Henry, 89
Thorne, Thomas, 260
Tichborne Claimant, 204
Tom and Jerry, 256

INDEX

"Tom and Jerry" (New York drink), 256
Tom Thumb, "General," 159
"Tony Lumpkin," 255
Toole, T. L., 68
Trafalgar, Battle of, 33, 62, 165
—— Square, 242
Travels in Italy (Addison), 265
"Triplet," 255
True Sun, 33, 227, 240
Turner, J. M. W., R.A., 98, 268
"Tweedledum and Tweedledee," 241
Twickenham, 59

Uncle Tom's Cabin, 182
United States, 82, 119, 165, 190, 191
University College, 9
—— of London, 9

Vezin, Herman, 260
Victoria, Queen, 73, 86, 101, 103, 135, 156, 158

Walpole, Horace, 180, 201
Wandering Minstrel, 81
Ward, E. M., R.A., 70
Warner, Mrs., 144
——, Charles, 144
Warwick, 165
Waterfall of St. Wington, 64
Waterloo, 165, 173
Waterloo Conservative Hotel, Durham, 185
Watson, Sir Thomas, 89
Webster, 197, 202
——, Benjamin, 68, 212, 254, 255
Wellstood, Frederick C., M.A., 116, 117, 118, 121
White Doe of Rylstone, 229
Whiteside, James (Lord Chief Justice, Ireland), 11, 13, 14, 17, 26
"William," 173
Wilmott, Mr., 133, 134, 135
Wilton, Marie (Lady Bancroft), 260, 261
Wiltshire, 65
Windsor, 59
Winter, Gilbert, 52
Woffington, Peg, 255
Wordsworth, William, 138, 165, 229
Wright, Edward, 258

Yates, Edmund, 256
——, Frederick, 256, 257, 258
"Yellow Dwarf," 81, 201
York, 171
—— Theatre Royal, 171

"Zip Coon," 171

Richard Clay & Sons, Limited, London and Bungay.

BINDING SECT. JUN 4 1962

PR
29
F67R45
1912
c.1
ROBA

Renton, Richard
John Forster

PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE
CARDS OR SLIPS FROM THIS POCKET

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARY